



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE  
OF MARYLAND

The Maryland Episcopal  
Public Policy  
Network

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 917  
FAVORABLE  
Public Schools—Restorative Practices Schools-Establishment**

**TO: Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair, Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Co-Chair, and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee**

**FROM: Rev. Linda K. Boyd, Episcopal Diocese of Maryland**

**DATE: March 6, 2024:**

The Episcopal Church at large and the Diocese of Maryland have embraced the concept of reparations, a concept not limited to financial considerations but to a leveling of the playing field across a broad spectrum of issues, including achieving equity in quality-of-life issues, such as education. Restorative practices offer schools an alternative to traditional disciplinary actions that center on punishment for misbehavior and breaking rules. These punishments push kids—disproportionately students of color and low-income students—out of their classroom and school community. They may be suspended or simply sent to the principal’s office, but students who are pushed out may drop out of school altogether.

In contrast, restorative practices focus on resolving conflict, repairing harm, and healing relationships. They support a positive and safe school climate, prevent bullying, and reduce disciplinary incidents. A restorative culture can mitigate the negative effects of punitive discipline policies that exacerbate inequity. Research shows that education is one of the most effective weapons we have to help children become law-abiding citizens, competent and skilled workers and responsible parents.

**The Diocese of Maryland requests a favorable report on SB 917.**