



Delaware-Maryland Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Testimony Prepared for the
Appropriations Committee
on
House Bill 609
February 13, 2024
Position: **Favorable**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to support the dignity of human effort by acknowledging the human right to organize and bargain collectively. I am Lee Hudson, assistant to the bishop for public policy in the Delaware-Maryland Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We are a faith community with three judicatories in every part of our State.

Our community supports the human rights of workers, to include a right to organize and bargain collectively in the interest of fair wages and safe, just work conditions. A 2017 message among us concerning human rights as principle and instrument, affirmed a 1999 ELCA statement about justice in the *oikos*, the economy. Among the pillars of economic justice is, *(t)he principle of participation (to mean) all are entitled to be heard and to have their interests considered when decisions are made.* Support for the right to organize and bargain is in the written record of the predecessor bodies of our church going back at least to the 1930s; it is implied in the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and it is law in the United States.

For those reasons we support the right of workers to organize and bargain when that right is under public discussion; and we support **House Bill 609**. And we urge a favorable report.

Lee Hudson