



**Maryland Commission
on LGBTQIA+ Affairs**

**TESTIMONY OF JEREMY BROWNING
DIRECTOR, MARYLAND COMMISSION ON LGBTQIA+ AFFAIRS
FAVORABLE STATEMENT ON HB0485
PUBLIC HEALTH - PROHIBITION ON TRANSFER OF HUMAN
IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS - REPEL**

February 6, 2024

Judiciary Committee

The Hon. Luke Clippinger, Chair
The Hon. J. Sandy Bartlett, Vice Chair

Chair Clippinger, Vice-Chair Bartlett, and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Jeremy Browning (he/him), and I am the Director of the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs. I am honored to testify today in strong support of House Bill 485, which seeks to eliminate the unequal treatment of those living with HIV.

The Commission believes that the current legislation perpetuates stigmatization and discrimination against individuals living with HIV. By repealing this unfair law, Maryland has an opportunity to take a significant step towards fostering a more inclusive and compassionate approach to public health.

While we understand the importance of protecting public health, criminalizing individuals living with HIV only serves to further marginalize already vulnerable community members. HIV-related criminal laws disproportionately impact LGBTQIA+ individuals, particularly those with marginalized racial and economic backgrounds.

Laws that criminalize individuals living with HIV contribute to the perpetuation of stigma and discrimination, hindering efforts to encourage testing, treatment, and open communication about HIV. Instead, the focus should be on promoting education, awareness, and expanding access to preventative measures, like Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP).

Repealing this harmful legislation will send a powerful message that Maryland is committed to ensuring the rights and dignity of all individuals, regardless of their HIV status.

For those reasons, the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs strongly urges a favorable report on House Bill 485.

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