



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

Testimony Prepared for the
Ways and Means Committee
on
Senate Bill 361
March 25, 2025
Position: **Favorable**

Madam Chair and members of the Committee thank you for the opportunity to testify for a human right to participate in society by the franchise. 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.

In a 2017 message on “Human Rights”, our community affirmed that the right to vote is one of them. Rights are an expression of the sacred image that inheres in humans. A right to participate in decision-making that affects life and living is an inherent human right: *The principle of participation means all are entitled to be heard and to have their interests considered when decisions are made* (9pg.12).

Denying or qualifying that right, whether it be barriers to voting, intimidation and threat, confusing information about what is being decided, or outright fraud and deception, is injustice. With the progress of internet activity into social media and other aggregation platforms, and with tools for making deep-fake, life-like algorithmic/AI content explicitly meant to discourage and degrade public decision-making, the right of participation will be lost. We claim such activity is a human right violation.

Senate Bill 361 aims to define and proscribe that violation, and we support that aim. Fraudulent process is fraud nevertheless and there is ample law that states why it is criminal and why it harms both victim and the whole. That ought to apply to electioneering and voting procedure. So, we urge your favorable report.

Lee Hudson