



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

**Testimony on Senate Bill 346 – Favorable
SB346 – Civil Rights – Violation of Constitutional Rights (No Kings Act)
Judicial Proceedings
February 10, 2026**

TO: Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair; Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair; and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Rev. Kenneth O. Phelps, Jr., Member – Maryland Public Policy Network

DATE: February 10, 2026

The 79th General Convention of the Episcopal Church proclaimed that the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement repudiates all ‘political appeals and language rooted in the sin of scapegoating groups of human beings on the basis of race, language, culture, belief, economic and physical condition, immigration status, gender identification, and sexual orientation’ and condemns the violation of basic human rights that result from said practices.

It is the Church’s observation that such violations have escalated alarmingly in the current political climate, including, but not limited to, the targeting of people of African descent in our cities—blamed for crime; non-white immigrants and asylum seekers from Latin America and the Southern Hemisphere—blamed for stealing jobs; visitors and U.S. citizens from Arab Muslim countries—blamed for terrorism; indigenous peoples—blamed for a wide range of social ills and for thwarting energy independence; women and LGBTQ+ people—blamed for the de-masculinization and disintegration of society and families; the economically disadvantaged—blamed for being a burden on the wealthy and comfortable; the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated—condemned as irredeemable; and persons with disabilities—ridiculed, as in Jesus’s time, as outcasts.

The Church holds the violation of constitutional rights to be abhorrent to the heart of Christ and the soul of democracy. It offends against the rootedness of the best ideals of our government in the ethics respecting the dignity of individuals to which Christianity and all great faiths are pledged. It degrades politics by basing appeals for votes on fear and hate instead of hope and love. It invites comparisons to the darkest moments in human history.



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The Episcopal Church has a stated goal of uniting people of faith and like mind and spirit behind a consolidated, comprehensive, and coordinated witness against an ungodly practice that pollutes and strains our common life.

The Diocese of Maryland requests a favorable report.