

# HOUSE BILL 181

D5, G1

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT  
(PRE-FILED)

2lr0624

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By: **Delegate Hill**

Requested: October 4, 2021

Introduced and read first time: January 12, 2022

Assigned to: Health and Government Operations

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Declaration of Rights – Religious Freedom, Religious Tests, and Oaths and**  
3 **Affirmations**

4 FOR the purpose of altering and removing references to God from certain provisions  
5 relating to religious freedom, religious tests, and oaths and affirmations.

6 BY proposing an amendment to the Maryland Constitution  
7 Declaration of Rights  
8 Article 36, 37, and 39

9 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
10 (Three-fifths of all the members elected to each of the two Houses concurring), That it be  
11 proposed that the Maryland Constitution read as follows:

12 **Declaration of Rights**

13 Article 36.

14 [That as it is the duty of every man to worship God in such manner as he thinks  
15 most acceptable to Him, all] **ALL** persons are equally entitled to protection in their religious  
16 liberty; wherefore, no person ought by any law to be molested in [his] person or estate, on  
17 account of [his] **THE** religious persuasion[,] or profession **OF THE PERSON**, or for [his]  
18 **THE** religious practice **OF THE PERSON**, unless, under the color of religion, [he] **THE**  
19 **PERSON** shall disturb the good order, peace or safety of the State, or [shall infringe the  
20 laws of morality, or] injure others in their natural, civil or religious rights; nor ought any  
21 person to be compelled to frequent, or maintain, or contribute, unless on contract, to  
22 maintain, any place of worship, or any ministry; nor shall any person, otherwise competent,  
23 be deemed incompetent as a witness, or juror, on account of [his] **THE** religious belief[,  
24 provided, he believes in the existence of God, and that under His dispensation such person

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 will be held morally accountable for his acts, and be rewarded or punished therefor either  
2 in this world or in the world to come] **OF THE PERSON.**

3 [Nothing shall prohibit or require the making reference to belief in, reliance upon,  
4 or invoking the aid of God or a Supreme Being in any governmental or public document,  
5 proceeding, activity, ceremony, school, institution, or place.

6 Nothing in this article shall constitute an establishment of religion.]

7 Article 37.

8 That no religious test ought ever to be required as a qualification for any office of  
9 profit or trust in this State[, other than a declaration of belief in the existence of God]; nor  
10 shall the Legislature prescribe any other oath of office than the oath prescribed by this  
11 Constitution.

12 Article 39.

13 That the manner of administering an oath or affirmation to any person, ought to be  
14 such as those of the religious persuasion, profession, or denomination, of which [he] **THE**  
15 **PERSON** is a member[, generally esteem the most effectual confirmation by the attestation  
16 of the Divine Being].

17 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the General Assembly  
18 determines that the amendment to the Maryland Constitution proposed by Section 1 of this  
19 Act affects multiple jurisdictions and that the provisions of Article XIV, § 1 of the Maryland  
20 Constitution concerning local approval of constitutional amendments do not apply.

21 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the amendment to the  
22 Maryland Constitution proposed by Section 1 of this Act shall be submitted to the qualified  
23 voters of the State at the next general election to be held in November 2022 for adoption or  
24 rejection pursuant to Article XIV of the Maryland Constitution. At that general election,  
25 the vote on the proposed amendment to the Constitution shall be by ballot, and on each  
26 ballot there shall be printed the words “For the Constitutional Amendment” and “Against  
27 the Constitutional Amendment”, as now provided by law. Immediately after the election,  
28 all returns shall be made to the Governor of the vote for and against the proposed  
29 amendment, as directed by Article XIV of the Maryland Constitution, and further  
30 proceedings had in accordance with Article XIV.