

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 36 (Delegate Stewart)
Rules and Executive Nominations

**Annotated Code - Terminology - Clergy and Churches, Faith Institutions, and
Places of Worship**

This bill alters terminology throughout the Maryland Annotated Code so that (1) references to clergymen are replaced with terms that are religiously and gender neutral and (2) references to churches are replaced with terms that are religiously neutral, including “faith institutions” and “places of worship.” A “faith institution” is any Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist, or Hindu congregation, or any other religious society, congregation, or denomination. The bill also makes conforming changes.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is technical in nature and has no effect on governmental operations or finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Generally, the Maryland Annotated Code refers to clergymen in gendered language and religious institutions as churches.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See SB 24 and HB 2 of 2025.

Designated Cross File: SB 93 (Senator Kagan) - Education, Energy, and the Environment.

Information Source(s): Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 13, 2026
sj/mcr

Analysis by: Thomas S. Elder

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510