



VISION - BRIDGE Maryland sees the state challenged by a history of inequity but engaged in community organizing for a more just tomorrow.

MISSION - BRIDGE Maryland uses intentional relationship building, organizing and intensive leadership development in order to strengthen congregations and faith leaders to demonstrate and advance justice in the world.

HB 231: The HOME Act – SUPPORT

Testimony of Rev. Marlon Tilghman, Delegate, mintilghman816@gmail.com

BRIDGE Maryland, Inc.

House Environment and Transportation Committee, February 4, 2020

Grace and peace, I hope for you! As I pondered how to communicate the need for a law that addresses the civil rights of Marylanders to accepted their legal source of income; I wanted to share a belief that is universal for Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhist or even agnostic. A message that span all beliefs and that statement is, *do unto others as you would have them do unto you.*

I also pondered how I can illustrate this message of fairness for families who simply want the opportunity for a better quality of life. So, let me tell you a story about why I advocate for the voiceless. My story is about my two granddaughters (4 and 11) and their future. You see my granddaughters do not live in the same household because their parents are separated and live in different household. However, should either of their mothers be in the need of assistance via a housing choice voucher, without this bill their choices could change dramatically. By not passing this bill you would be telling one of my granddaughters that she cannot live in the same neighborhood as her sister because of her parent's source of income. You could be telling one of my granddaughters that she cannot attend the same schools as her sister because of her parent's source of income. You could be telling one of my granddaughters that she can not have the same opportunities in life as her sister because of her parent's source of income.

Shouldn't my granddaughters be able to live in the same community? Wouldn't you want the same for your children, grandchildren and generations to come? I am not Naïve. People will discriminate based on ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, etc. You cannot legislate a person's values. However, this bill would make it unlawful to discriminate based on a person's source of income. Thus, justice can act on behalf of those who currently have no place to call home.

Respectfully submitted,