

State of Maryland

Commission on Civil Rights

“Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination.”



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February 25, 2020

House Bill 703 – Maryland Commission on Civil Rights – Employment Discrimination - Reporting Position: Support

Dear Chairperson Pendergrass, Vice Chairperson Peña-Melnyk, and Members of the House Health & Government Operations Committee:

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (“MCCR”; “The Commission”) is the State agency responsible for the enforcement of laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and state contracts based upon race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, and physical and mental disability.

House Bill 703 requires county offices of civil rights for Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George’s counties and the City of Baltimore to report to MCCR by October 1 of each year the number of employment discrimination complaints received by their respective local offices. The following data is required from each county:

1. The type of discrimination alleged (protected class, such as race, sex, or disability),
2. The category of job held by the Complainant (such as contractual, full time, part time),
3. Whether the Complainant is a public or private sector employee, and
4. The Complainant’s country of origin.

MCCR would then include a review of this data in the agency’s Annual Report submitted to the Governor and General Assembly by January 1 of each year, as well as any recommendations for policy changes to address noted discriminatory trends based on data collected by the counties and the State.

The Commission currently maintains data regarding allegations of unlawful employment discrimination, and includes that data in the Annual Report submitted every year. This data is broken down by both the county in which the incident occurred, as well as the protected class under State law. However, MCCR does not readily have access to employment discrimination data maintained by county offices of civil rights. HB703 establishes a defined information sharing structure between the counties and the State to ensure that information of particular

interest to our policymakers are consistently reported in an effort to identify discriminatory trends, as well as to formulate potential solutions to address these trends.

For these reasons, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights urges a favorable report on HB703. Thank you for considering this testimony. MCCR looks forward to the continued opportunity to work with you to promote and improve civil rights in Maryland.