



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

SUPPORT

HB 0706

Commission on LGBTQ Affairs--Established
Health and Government Operations Committee

Good afternoon Chair Pendergrass, Vice-Chair Pena-Melnyk, members of the Health and Government Operations Committee, my name is Linda Boyd and today, I represent the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland. The Diocese represents 108 parishes and over 45,000 parishioners stretching from Western Maryland to Calvert County. The Maryland Episcopal Diocese supports HB 706.

This bill establishes the Commission on LGBTQ Affairs in the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives (GOCI). The commission will assess the challenges facing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) communities. In addition, it will collect data across State agencies on the implementation of LGBTQ-inclusive policies and complaints alleging discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. This information will allow the Commission to complete an assessment of laws and other protections for LGBTQ workers and residents in Maryland. Such a Commission can serve as a place where people in Maryland throughout Maryland can find information pertaining their region.

Presently, we do not know the extent of discrimination against LGBTQ workers and residents in Maryland. This Commission will have the authority to investigate the extent of any such discrimination.

We respectfully request a favorable report.