



[Secular Coalition for Maryland](http://secular.org) Secular Coalition for
America <http://secular.org>

February 05, 2020

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Health and Government Operations Committee
House Office Building, room 241
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SUPPORT *HB0255 (SB0547) Health Care Facilities - Hospitals and Related Institutions -
Discrimination Protections*

Chairwoman and Members of the Committee:

The Secular Coalition for Maryland welcomes this bill requiring all health care facilities to uphold common sense non-discrimination standards. Invidious discrimination hurts us as a society, it divides people and impedes people from realizing their potential. The health care sector in particular has a responsibility to not engage in counterproductive discrimination. All people who need medical care should be able to obtain needed health care without worrying about being mistreated or denied service.

Discrimination in health care settings can endanger people's lives through delays or denials of medically necessary care. Alternatives may not be easily accessible for patients that seek medical care and are turned away by providers. This concern is exacerbated by a shortage of medical providers in key areas of treatment and some geographic areas (such as rural communities).

The Affordable Care Act Section 1557 prohibits health care providers (and insurance companies) from engaging in discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Section 1557 applies to any health program or activity any part of which received

funding from HHS or that HHS itself administers. Unlike the ACA, this bill protects everyone everywhere in Maryland. Please vote for this common sense bill.