

**Baptist Ministers' Night Conference of  
Baltimore and Vicinity (BMNCBV)**

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**TESTIMONY OF  
REV. DR. SANDRA CONNER,  
PRESIDENT BAPTIST MINISTERS'  
NIGHT CONFERENCE OF BALTIMORE  
& VICINITY (BMNCBV)  
BEFORE THE HEALTH AND  
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS  
COMMITTEE  
IN SUPPORT OF HB 463,  
THE MARYLAND HEALTH EQUITY RESOURCE ACT  
February 2, 2021**

First, thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony for a very important health legislature that will not only benefit people of color, but all citizens of Maryland. Second, faith groups from across Maryland are a key part of the HERC coalition of over 250 organizations which have endorsed this proposal.

We acknowledge the fact that Maryland has high quality health systems; however, we also realize it's time for it to make greater investments to address inequities and disparities in those areas within the state that lack vital health resources. The Health Equity Resource Communities proposal would be a great way to do this.

We welcome the plan for the HERC to generate the funds needed for this initiative by increasing the alcoholic beverages tax by one penny per dollar. The alcohol sales tax increase would also save lives by reducing underage drinking and drunk driving.

Because many of us in the faith community believe doing whatever we can to eradicate health inequities and disparities is our moral obligation, we will make enacting the Health Equity Resource Communities legislation one of our top priorities for the 2021 Maryland General Assembly session. We pray that our legislators will heed our call.

We thank you in advance for your actions towards HB463.

Best Regards,  
Pastor Sandra Conner,  
President Baptist Ministers' Night Conference of Baltimore & Vicinity