

State of Maryland

Commission on Civil Rights

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



Officers

Alvin O. Gillard, Executive Director
Nicolette Young, Assistant Director
Glendora C. Hughes, General Counsel

Governor
Larry Hogan
Lt. Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford
Commission Chairperson
Gary C. Norman, Esq.
Commission Vice Chairperson
Roberto N. Allen, Esq.
Commissioners
Allison U. Dichoso, Esq.
Hayden B. Duke
Janssen E. Evelyn, Esq.
Eileen M. Levitt, SPHR, SHRM-SCP
Rabbi Binyamin Marwick
Jeff Rosen
Gina McKnight-Smith, PharmD, MBA

February 9, 2021

Senate Bill 85 – Creating Governor's Office of Immigrant Affairs **POSITION: Support**

Dear Chairperson Pinsky, Vice Chairperson Kagan, and Members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental 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, physical and mental disability, and source of income.

Senate Bill 85 establishes the Governor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs and its structure. The Office is mandated to connect immigrants with community resources and support services; support initiatives to increase equity and opportunity with immigrants; reduce barriers to accessibility for immigrants due to language barriers; advise the Governor concerning matters affecting immigrants; coordinate with other state agencies to ensure resource delivery that serves the need of immigrants, and provide support to local governments to support immigrants and their communities. The Office will also be required to submit an Annual Report with specific information on June 15, beginning in 2022.

Unlawful discrimination based on race and national origin continue to be chronic issues facing Marylanders, especially within immigrant communities. Providing access to resources and support services to those who are marginalized and disenfranchised is an effective way to eradicate unlawful discrimination and to promote equality. Leveraging the resources and knowledge of the state government and its partners builds more secure, vibrant, and cohesive communities for everyone’s benefit.

For these reasons, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights urges a favorable vote on SB85. Thank you for your time and consideration of the information contained in this letter. The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights looks forward to the continued opportunity to work with you to improve and promote civil rights in Maryland.