



January 19, 2021

Honorable Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
House Office Building, Room 241
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB78 – Public Health - Maryland Commission on Health Equity (The Shirley Nathan-Pulliam Health Equity Act of 2021)

Dear Chair Shane E. Pendergrass and House Health and Government Committee Members:

On behalf of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, I thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 78 entitled Public Health - Maryland Commission on Health Equity. CAIR is America's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization. Its mission is to enhance the understanding of Islam, protect civil rights, promote justice, and empower American Muslims.

Racism has been on the forefront of this past year, however there are many consequences of racism, and health inequity is one of them. Research shows that ethnic minorities and people of color tend to have access to lower quality of health compared with others. In fact, according to the Center for American Progress, African-Americans are less likely to have health insurance and also have the highest mortality rate for all cancers.¹

These health inequities are partly due to poverty, less access to affordable medical care, and discrimination in the health care system. This bill will take a step towards fighting health inequity by making sure health disparities are recognized and addressed. These health disparities are exacerbated by racism and contribute to societal inequities.

A designated commission tasked with fact-finding and reporting will help promote positive outcomes and reduce health disparities in the state of Maryland by identifying and correcting the factors that lead to health inequity.

We support this measure and urge your vote in favor of it. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Huzzaifa Muhammad
Government Affairs Intern, CAIR Office in Maryland

Council on American-Islamic Relations
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References:

1. Health Disparities by Race and Ethnicity.

<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/race/reports/2020/05/07/484742/health-disparities-race-ethnicity/> Accessed January 19, 2021.