

**SB 768 - Nondiscrimination and LGBTQ+ Individuals**

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**\*SUPPORT\***

**March 9, 2021**

Senator Smith and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, Maryland Chapter (NASW-MD), we would like to express our support for **SB 768 - Nondiscrimination and LGBTQ+ Individuals**.

This bill makes clear that it is the policy of the State to provide equal access to various courts, agencies, programs, departments, and services for LGBTQ+ individuals, to improve safety, well-being, and stability for them, and ensures that they are protected from discrimination on the basis of certain nonmerit factors.

One of the core principles of social work practice is dignity and worth of the person, meaning every person has value and that social workers accept and respect them for who they are. This means not discriminating. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) persons face a long history of discrimination in this country. Many LGBTQ individuals have fought for legal protections, and have watched with dismay as state legislatures across the country have enacted laws allowing discrimination once again. This bill would ensure that this does not happen in Maryland.

This bill will improve the lives and well-being of LGBTQ+ individuals in Maryland.

**We urge you to vote YES on SB 768.**

Thank you,

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