



TESTIMONY FOR SB0768 Nondiscrimination and LGBTQ+ INDIVIDUALS

Bill Sponsor: Senator Washington

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0768 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Our members are in strong support of their LGBTQ+ neighbors. They have very difficult lives and are the subject of much hostility and discrimination. We applaud Senator Washington for sponsoring this bill and hope that not only does it pass, but it makes a difference in how people, and especially youth, who have a different gender identity or sexual orientation are treated in this state.

Maryland has long prided itself on being a very welcoming state, yet data shows us that in the criminal justice system, in housing, in the provision of social services (including child and family services), in schools and in businesses, LGBTQIA people are treated poorly. They are refused service or told that there are no services available, when they clearly are available. This is unconscionable. Discrimination is harmful and wrong. It reflects poorly on everyone in this state and should not be allowed.

We ask you to provide protections for those whose lives are already harmed. The Maryland Legislative Coalition supports this bill and recommends a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.