



March 19, 2021

The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Judiciary Committee
Room 101, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

Re: *SUPPORT* HB0243 Family Law - Grounds for Divorce

Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Secular Maryland favors, and encourages, passage of this bill which adds an "irreconcilable differences" justification with a six month waiting period for divorce. There is no secular state interest that is sufficiently compelling to force people who are married to remain married against their will when their marriage has become dysfunctional and there appears to be little realistic prospect of it improving.

Some religions consider divorce and remarriage to be "evils". They may declare adultery to be the only scripturally justifiable grounds for divorce while permanently denying church membership to anyone guilty of the "sins" of adultery and/or remarriage. Such policies are derived from passages in the Bible such as "Let not the wife depart from her husband...let not the husband put away his wife" (1 Corinthians 7:10-11) and "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth. . . . So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress" (Romans 7:2-3). Other religions take no position on divorce or consider marriage to always be voluntary. Our government should refrain from taking sides or otherwise setting policies to match any particular religious perspective.



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