



TESTIMONY FOR HB0455

State Personnel - Implicit Bias Awareness Training - Required

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Wells

Committee: Appropriations

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0455 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of individuals and grassroots groups with members in every district in the state with well over 30,000 members.

No one is free from bias. Sometimes, bias is so ingrained that we don't even recognize it. But it does color the interactions that we have every day. Recognizing that no one person is representative of a race, or ethnicity, or a *type*, and seeing past the biases that we have helps us do our jobs better and treat people more fairly.

For any employer, that's a good goal – to train their employees in such a way that they can be better at doing their jobs. In that respect, the state should set an example for other businesses to follow.

This bill would allow the state to do just that. For all Executive, Judicial and Legislative branches of the state government, as well as independent personnel systems, employees would be required to take two hours of in-person or virtual, interactive training on awareness of implicit bias within six months of initial appointment, and then once a year. The training itself is designed to provide information about implicit bias, and to also be somewhat self-reflective.

There are many ways to on-board a new employee, and also to update their training from time to time. This training should be part of that process, and once developed, should be a valuable part of ensuring that employees are provided the very best tools in order to successfully carry out their responsibilities.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.