

MINISTERS' CONFERENCE OF BALTIMORE AND VICINITY



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 632 BEFORE THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

BISHOP REGINALD KENNEDY, PRESIDENT

MINISTERS' CONFERENCE OF BALTIMORE & VICINITY, (MCBV)

March 2, 2022

Dear Committee Members:

We appreciate having this opportunity to submit testimony for a very important health bill that will help small employers be able to afford to offer high quality health coverage to their employees. The Ministers' Conference of Baltimore & Vicinity (MCBV) is an organization comprised of more than 150 congregations whose focus is shifting more and more on caring for the "holistic" needs, in particular health care, for its members and the people of the communities it serves.

We acknowledge that Maryland has some of the best health systems in the country; however, we believe there is still a need to make greater investments to improve access to health coverage and inequities. Many small organizations, including faith-based organizations, have a hard time offering health coverage to their employees because of the cost. Maryland has the highest rate per-capita of businesses owned by people of color in the country, and disparities in access in health coverage continue to persist by race and ethnicity. To effectively "do ministry" and serve its congregation and people of its communities, many faith leaders are not able to attract adequate staff or ensure those who are employed have health coverage to stay healthy and come to work.

MCBV believes many of our member congregations will benefit from the passing of SB632; for this reason, we will support this bill to create a small employer health insurance subsidies program and will make it one of our top priorities for the 2022 Maryland General Assembly session. We pray that our legislators will heed our call.

We thank you in advance for your actions towards SB632.

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