



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

SUPPORT
HB 0159

Economic Justice and Racial Reconciliation Act
Health and Government Operations Committee

Good afternoon, Chair Pendergrass, Vice-Chair Pena-Melnyk, members of the Health and Government Operations Committee, my name is Glenn Mortoro and I represent the Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network (MEPPN) and the Maryland Episcopal Diocese. The Diocese supports HB 159. Since slavery was abolished, there have been prejudicial government actions that have had deleterious effects on the well-being of the African American community. Practices such as redlining, predatory lending and mass incarceration are examples of oppression of African Americans. The actions of governments in recent history of denying African American access to resources such as the GI Bill after WWII and equal educational opportunities, for example, prevented the accumulation of generational wealth and economic growth in African American communities. The Episcopal Church wants to acknowledge that past and to move forward to repair and heal a broken and divided society. The Maryland Diocese of the Episcopal Church recently overwhelmingly adopted a resolution supporting reparations in order engage in repair, restoration, and healing. Laws and systems that helped to cause the disparity between whites and people of color, must be studied for the impact that they have had. Sums must be granted to enable improvement in schools, access to housing, higher education, mental and emotional well-being to enable equity and fairness among all American citizens. The establishment of a Commission is necessary to explore the history of discrimination and its impact on our African American citizens. This will further acknowledge the harms done to them and will help to determine and provide for a path forward. We respectfully request a favorable report.