

Friday, January 28, 2022

**HB0181 - SUPPORT**

Declaration of Rights – Religious Freedom, Religious Tests, and Oaths and Affirmations

Dear Chair Pendegrass, Vice-Chair Pena-Melnyk, and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

HB0181 serves the purpose of altering and removing references to God from certain provisions relating to religious freedom, religious tests, and oaths and affirmations by proposing amendments to the Maryland Constitution, Declaration of Rights, Article 36, 37, and 39.

Summary of the Bill: Altering and removing references to God from certain provisions relating to religious freedom, religious tests, and oaths and affirmations; and providing that the amendment to the Maryland Constitution proposed by Section 1 of the Act be submitted to the qualified voters of the State at the next general election to be held in November 2022 for adoption or rejection.

Our Constitution starts “We the people of the United States,” and goes on as a secular declaration in which all references to a deity are exclusionary. Article VI says “but no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States;” and its First Amendment goes on “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion.” The language in the Maryland Constitution has been deemed unconstitutional but never removed. It is time that the state constitution be amended to delete this unconstitutional language.

I strongly support bill HB0181.

Respectfully,

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