

# State of Maryland

## Commission on Civil Rights

*“Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination.”*



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**March 1, 2022**

### **House Bill 516 – St. Mary’s County Human Relations Commission – Equal Treatment POSITION: Support**

Dear Chairperson Pendergrass, Vice Chairperson Peña-Melnyk, and Members of the House Health & Government Operations Committee:

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (“MCCR”; “The Commission”) is the State agency responsible for the enforcement of laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, health services and state contracts based upon race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, physical and mental disability, and source of income.

House Bill 516 alters the St. Mary’s County Human Relations Commission enabling statute’s list of protected classes by adding sexual orientation and gender identity. HB 516 also adds prohibition against discrimination in education. In doing this, their mandate is to “encourage and ensure equal treatment of all people in **ACCORDANCE** with federal, State, and local laws and regulations related to housing, **EDUCATION**, employment, and public accommodations.”

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights supports HB 516 because it provides additional protected classes and a new area of coverage under the statute for the St. Mary’s County Human Relations Commission to ensure equal treatment in the community.

For these reasons, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights strongly urges a favorable vote on HB 516. Thank you for your time and consideration of the information contained in this letter. The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights looks forward to the continued opportunity to work with you to improve and promote civil rights in Maryland.

***MCCR’s Biennial Civil Rights & Fair Housing Gala Celebration: April 30, 2022***

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