



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB0588**

**Health Insurance - Qualified Resident Enrollment Program  
(Access to Care Act)**

**House Health and Government Operations Committee**

**FAVORABLE**

**TO:** Honorable Chair Peña-Melynk, and Members of the Committee,

**FROM:** Rev. Kenneth Phelps, Jr., Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network

**DATE:** February 16, 2023

The Episcopal Church supports comprehensive health care and recognizes the need for universal and equitable access for all. General Convention urges Episcopalians to advocate for adequate health care, along with nutrition and housing, as human rights that should be provided to all those residing in our nation, including immigrants, undocumented or otherwise. This advocacy on a number of healthcare policy asks is viewed as a Church ministry and as a way to promote healthy American communities.

The Diocese of Maryland is pleased to offer a favorable testimony in strong support of the Maryland HB 588. Although Maryland has taken bold steps toward ensuring everyone has access to care, the immigrant community has been left behind.

Unfortunately, 275K+ undocumented immigrants in Maryland are ineligible for care through the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE) due to their immigration status. Multiple states across the country have established comprehensive programs to extend coverage to immigrants regardless of their immigration status, and despite the profound cultural contributions immigrants make to the state, along with their essential role in the Maryland workforce and millions in contributions to society and the economy through federal, state, and local taxes - they are still ineligible for the Affordable Care Act.

HB 588 addresses critical health disparities faced by the immigrant community in Maryland by expanding the Affordable Care Act to all Marylanders who meet the regular eligibility, regardless of their immigration status. HB 588 also establishes a State Subsidy Program to ensure newly covered individuals have the funding to receive care.



# THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

The Maryland Episcopal  
Public Policy  
Network

This common-sense legislation is uncontentious and aligns Maryland with its values of protecting our communities and treating all people with dignity, respect, and care.

The Diocese of Maryland requests a Favorable report