



## Family Heritage Matters

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### 8 March 2023 Bill Hearing

Chairperson Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk

Health and Government Operations Committee

Maryland House of Delegates

**Room 241**

**House Office Building**

**Annapolis, Maryland 21401**

RE: In OPPOSITION to **HB0871**, regarding the removal of God from our Maryland constitution.

Dear Madam Chair and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee:

The legislation that is before you now may seem harmless, or even good at first, but it is a serious, heavily consequential bill. When making new laws, you must be sober-minded and weigh all the implications wisely, how much more so when dealing with a constitutional amendment. This bill goes forward with the pretense of adding religious freedom to our great state of Maryland, including the freedom of no religion at all, as it seeks to delete all language referencing God in the constitution. Unfortunately, while holding this guise, and oddly going out of its way to also delete any gender-specific pronouns, the bill works in the opposite direction, making it easier for religious freedom to be quenched by the government or an organization. Much of the purpose of this bill is to *delete* certain language, but this causes a major problem at one point. There is a section that is being erased under this bill which states that “Nothing shall **prohibit** or **require** the making reference to belief in...God...in any **governmental** or **public** document, proceeding, activity, ceremony, school, institution, or place.” Essentially, by saying this, the Maryland constitution is raising a stalwart of *defense* for the religious beliefs of a person, so that no one can *require* them to reference their faith, but also no one can *prohibit* it. By striking this language, this bill opens a floodgate of extreme tyranny, governmentally and also corporately. This is because every person would now be *allowed* by the constitution to **prohibit** someone else from even mentioning their faith in a public way. Such a removal is no declaration of rights at all, but rather a declaration of the right to *silence*, which is no American right at all. Therefore, I humbly ask you to vote **UNFAVORABLY** on HB 871.