



TESTIMONY FOR SB0540

Human Relations - Civil Rights Enforcement - Powers of the Attorney General

Bill Sponsor: President

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB0540 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

This bill would authorize the Attorney General to investigate and bring civil charges on behalf of the residents of the state against anyone who engages in discriminatory behavior. This would include discrimination in housing, employment or discrimination in public places of accommodation.

Given that many people who experience discrimination of this type do not have the financial means to defend themselves against this type of behavior, which makes the person(s) engaging in that behavior that much more likely to continue. Having the Attorney General's office step in would signal that Maryland does not tolerate discrimination.

This is exactly the kind of people that we are. We value other people and we value the diversity of our residents. We believe that having a fund that will pay for the Attorney General to represent the residents of the state in this way is a very positive thing.

We applaud this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.