



# State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

*Respect...Integrity...Effective Communication*

January 23, 2024

## **HB 0062 – State Employee Rights and Protections – Personnel Action and Harassment – Investigation of Complaints**

Dear Chairperson Barnes, Vice Chairperson Chang, and Members of the Appropriations 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, state contracts and health services 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.

HB 0062 will increase the time period for an inhouse investigation to be conducted and a written decision to be issued by a State agency regarding a complaint alleging unlawful discrimination or harassment filed by an applicant for State employment or a State employee. The current time allowed for an investigation is within 30 days. HB 0062 will extend that time to within 60 days that may be extended an additional 30 days if the applicant or employee who filed provides written authorization to the Equal Employment Officer (EEO Officer) investigating the complaint.

Providing additional time for an investigating EEO officer will allow for a more thorough investigation and sound decision making as opposed to a race to meet a short deadline. Many times, there are unforeseen circumstances that occur during investigations such as a delay in receiving needed documents, witness or complainant’s illness or availability, or challenges with the employer creating barriers or refusing to cooperate with the investigation. HB 0062 will provide some breathing room to address these various challenges. The goal should be to conduct a fair and thorough investigation for each filed complaint.

For these reasons, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights urges a favorable vote on HB 0062. Thank you for your time and consideration of the information contained in this letter. The Maryland Commission looks forward to the continued opportunity to work with you to improve and promote civil rights in Maryland.

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

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