

HB0391 Diocese of Easton Letter.pdf

Uploaded by: John Van De Weert

Position: FAV



The Diocese of Easton

The Episcopal Church in Eastern Maryland

The Right Rev. Santosh K. Marray, D. Min., D.D.
XI Bishop

The Hon. C. T. Wilson
Chair, Economic Matters Committee
House of Delegates
Maryland General Assembly
Room 231, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Submitted electronically

RE: HB0391 (cross-filed with SB0429)

Dear Chair Wilson:

I am writing in support of HB0391, entitled "Corporations and Associations – Protestant Episcopal Church, Diocese of Washington."

I serve as the XI Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Easton. Our Diocese comprises thirty-nine Episcopal congregations located in Maryland.

I urge the General Assembly to pass HB0391 in order to make uniform the corporate organization of Episcopal parishes throughout Maryland. My colleagues in the Episcopal Diocese of Washington have asked for our support of this measure, in order to repeal the outdated 1700s-era laws that currently apply only to parishes in the Diocese of Washington. These same changes were already made for the Diocese of Maryland in the 1970s and the Diocese of Easton in the 1990s. If passed, HB0391 will provide the same treatment to parishes in the Diocese of Washington as already applies in the Dioceses of Maryland and Easton.

Should you have any questions, please contact my office.

Sincerely,

The Right Rev. Santosh K. Marray, D. Min., D.D.
XI Bishop, The Episcopal Diocese of Easton

HB0391 Diocese of Maryland Letter.pdf

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Position: FAV



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

February 1, 2024

The Hon. C. T. Wilson
Chair, Economic Matters Committee
House of Delegates
Maryland General Assembly
Room 231, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Submitted electronically

RE: HB0391 (cross-filed with SB0429)

Dear Chair Wilson:

I am writing in support of HB0391, entitled "Corporations and Associations – Protestant Episcopal Church, Diocese of Washington."

I serve as the bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland. Our Diocese comprises 104 Episcopal congregations located in Maryland.

I urge the General Assembly to pass HB0391 in order to make uniform the corporate organization of Episcopal parishes throughout Maryland. My colleagues in the Episcopal Diocese of Washington have asked for our support of this measure, in order to repeal the outdated 1700s-era laws that currently apply only to parishes in the Diocese of Washington. These same changes were already made for the Diocese of Maryland in the 1970s and the Diocese of Easton in the 1990s. If passed, HB0391 will provide the same treatment to parishes in the Diocese of Washington as already applies in the Dioceses of Maryland and Easton.

Should you have any questions, please contact the Rev. Kristofer Lindh-Payne, canon to the ordinary for leadership.

Sincerely,

The Rt. Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton
Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

HB0391 Diocese of Washington Letter.pdf

Uploaded by: John Van De Weert

Position: FAV

Episcopal Diocese
of Washington



Diócesis Episcopal
de Washington

The Hon. C. T. Wilson
Chair, Economic Matters Committee
House of Delegates
Maryland General Assembly
Room 231, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Submitted electronically.

RE: HB0391 (cross-filed with SB0429)

Dear Chair Wilson:

I am writing in support of HB0391, entitled “Corporations and Associations – Protestant Episcopal Church, Diocese of Washington.”

I serve as the Ninth Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington. Our Diocese comprises 86 Episcopal congregations located in Charles, Montgomery, Prince George’s, and St. Mary’s Counties in Maryland, and in the District of Columbia.

I urge the General Assembly to pass HB0391 in order to help our parishes with their corporate governance. If passed, HB0391 will permit these parishes to be organized under the religious corporations article of the Maryland Corporations and Associations law, the same as Episcopal churches in other parts of Maryland (the Diocese of Maryland and the Diocese of Easton). This will also provide the same treatment as churches of other denominations. HB0391 would repeal obsolete provisions of the “Maryland Vestry Act” that date back to the 1700s. These uncodified statutes make it difficult for our parishes to establish their legal existence, complicating routine tasks like opening bank accounts or applying for grants.

Should you have any questions, please contact either The Rev. Canon Andrew Walter, Canon to the Ordinary and Chief Operating Officer of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington (202-537-6530, awalter@edow.org), or John Van De Weert, the Chancellor of the Diocese (202-577-1912, jvandeweert@sidley.com).

Sincerely,

The Rt. Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde
Bishop of Washington

HB0391 Van De Weert Testimony Diocese of Washingto

Uploaded by: John Van De Weert

Position: FAV

Written Testimony of John K. Van De Weert, Chancellor of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, in Support of HB0391, entitled “Corporations and Associations – Protestant Episcopal Church, Diocese of Washington”

I serve as the Chancellor of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, more formally called the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Washington. As Chancellor, I am the legal advisor to the Diocese and its Bishop. The Episcopal Diocese of Washington is composed of 86 Episcopal congregations, including 51 Episcopal parishes located in the Maryland counties of Charles, Montgomery, Prince George’s, and Saint Mary’s.

The Episcopal Church has long roots in Maryland, and some of our parishes were first organized before the Revolutionary War. In the 1790s, Maryland adopted a statute called the “Maryland Vestry Act” to govern Episcopal parishes. That statute still applies to the Episcopal parishes in the Episcopal Diocese of Washington.

There are two other Episcopal Dioceses in Maryland – the Diocese of Maryland and the Diocese of Easton. The parishes in those Dioceses were previously subject to the Maryland Vestry Act. However, that status changed in 1976 for the Diocese of Maryland and in 1990 for the Diocese of Easton. In 1976 and 1990, the Maryland General Assembly enacted bills to repeal the Maryland Vestry Act as applied to those Dioceses, and to make the Episcopal parishes in those Dioceses subject to the Religious Corporations article in the Corporations and Associations law – the same treatment as applied to churches in other denominations.

We are now asking the General Assembly to enact HB0391 to make this same change for the Episcopal churches in the Episcopal Diocese of Washington. HB0391 is modeled on the bill text enacted in 1976 and 1990.

This change will be a great help to the parishes in the Episcopal Diocese of Washington. Under the Maryland Vestry Act, parishes do not have articles of incorporation or charters filed with the State Department of Assessments and Taxation. Rather, parishes are created and exist solely by action of the Diocese. This creates challenges when parishes need to provide their governing documents to banks (when opening bank accounts), grant-making organizations, and other third parties. Recently, several of our parishes have been unable to open bank accounts or apply for grants because of this status.

In addition, HB0391 will repeal provisions of the Maryland Vestry Act that are obsolete, providing some very specific provisions about ecclesiastical matters that are not in accord with modern understanding of the separation of church and state.

For all of these reasons, I urge the Committee and the General Assembly to enact HB0391.

HB391 Diocese of Washington DTMorgan testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Todd Morgan

Position: FAV

TODD B. MORGAN
Legislative District 29C
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties

Environment and Transportation
Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 215
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 1, 2024

The Honorable C. T. Wilson
Chair, House Economic Matters Committee
Room 231, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

HB391 – Corporations and Associations - Protestant Episcopal Church, Diocese of Washington

Chair Wilson:

The purpose of this bill is to amend the Vestry Act so that all Protestant Episcopal churches in Maryland have the same corporate status. The Episcopal Churches of Maryland is made up of the Diocese of Maryland, the Diocese of Easton, and the Diocese of Washington.

Historically, all of the churches were treated the same in COMAR. However, in the 1970's the Diocese of Maryland received corporate status, and in the 1990's the Diocese of Easton did likewise. At that time, the Diocese of Washington could not request the same status because the laws of Maryland and the District of Columbia did not align. Since then, these laws have changed enabling this legislation.

The Diocese of Washington includes churches in St. Mary's, Charles, Prince Georges, and Montgomery Counties. HB391 allows all Episcopal churches in Maryland to have the same corporate status as other denominations. More importantly, it provides banks, grant givers and others more complete information on church status and allows them to operate in a transparent and open manner.

Thank you for your consideration and I respectfully ask for a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Todd B. Morgan".

Todd B. Morgan
Delegate, Calvert/St. Mary's County (29C)

HB391 SOMD Letter of Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Todd Morgan

Position: FAV

EDITH J. PATTERSON, ED.D.
Legislative District 28
Charles County

Ways and Means Committee

Subcommittees

Local Revenues

Chair, Racing and Gaming

Chair, Southern Maryland
House Delegation



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 19, 2024

The Honorable C.T Wilson
Chair
Economic Matters Committee
House Office Building
Room 251
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: HB391 Corporations and Associations - Protestant Episcopal Church, Diocese of Washington

Dear Chairman Wilson,

On behalf of the majority of the Southern Maryland Delegation members, we are writing to support **HB391 Corporations and Associations - Protestant Episcopal Church, Diocese of Washington.**

This bill makes Episcopal Churches in the Diocese of Washington, that are located in Maryland, subject to the same Religious Corporations law that governs other Episcopal Churches and churches of other denominations in Maryland. It will replace the 1700s-era laws that currently apply only to Episcopal Churches in the Diocese of Washington. This is needed for these churches to more easily open bank accounts and apply for grants.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Edith J. Patterson".

Delegate Edith J. Patterson,
Chair, Southern Maryland Delegation

HB0391_UNF_mgoldstein 2024.pdf

Uploaded by: Mathew Goldstein

Position: UNF



Secular Maryland

secularmaryland@tutanota.com

February 06, 2024

HB 391 - UNF

Corporations and Associations – Protestant Episcopal Church, Diocese of Washington

Dear Chair C. T. Wilson, Vice-Chair Brian M. Crosby, and Members of the Economic Matters Committee,

The Church of England was established under the Act for the Establishment of Religious Worship enacted by the Maryland Provincial General Assembly in 1702. Parish clergy and rectors were appointed by the Provincial Government and were for the most part loyalists, or priests sent from England. After the Revolution, most of the loyalist clergy fled to England or Canada leaving many parishes without rectors. The question of governance and ownership of Established Church property in Maryland became a major concern of vestries. The state's politicians intervened to resolve these issues in the Vestry Acts of 1779 and 1798. The vestry of any Episcopal parish serves as the legislative authority for the parish and transacts the temporal business of the parish. The primary responsibilities are parish finances, maintaining parish facilities, choosing parish leadership, and assisting the rector with his religious activities.

There should be no need for the state of Maryland to continue to maintain a law that addressed a temporary problem from several hundreds of years ago for this particular Protestant denomination in this particular state. Instead of bills like this that revise the Vestry Act, Secular Maryland would prefer a bill that removes all references to the Episcopal Church from state law.

Mathew Goldstein
3838 Early Glow Ln
Bowie, MD