



Testimony in Support of HB 602  
Employment Discrimination—Sexual Orientation  
**\*\*FAVORABLE\*\***

**TO:** Senator Pamela Beidle, Chair, Senator Katherine Klausmeier, Vice Chair and the members of the Senate Finance Committee

**FROM:** Rev. Linda K. Boyd, Co-Chair, Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network, Diocese of Maryland

**DATE:** March 21, 2024

With an estimated 2.3 million members, the Episcopal Church is open and welcoming of the LGBTQ+ community. Unlike the Worldwide Anglican Communion, of which it is a part, the Episcopal Church does not condemn homosexuality. Among its statements of belief, the Episcopal Church includes, “In Jesus, we find that the nature of God is love, and through baptism, we share in his victory over sin and death.” They further emphasize, “We strive to love our neighbors as ourselves and respect the dignity of every person.” In 1976, both the House of Deputies and House of Bishops voted for a fully inclusive Episcopal Church, stating, “homosexual persons are children of God who have a full and equal claim with all other persons upon the love, acceptance, and pastoral concern and care of the church.” Canon law includes “gender identity or expression” in its list of persons who are assured full access to the ministry of the church. The law further specifies that administrative forms must include options for both preferred and legal names, and for gender identity and pronoun preference.

The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland follows the stance taken by the National Church and strongly believes that every human being is an equal child of God regardless of gender identity or expression.

We respectfully request a favorable report.

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