



Delaware-Maryland Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Testimony Prepared for the
Rules and Executive Nominations Committee
on
House Resolution 7
March 11, 2024
Position: **Favorable**

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to support human rights. I am Lee Hudson, assistant to the bishop for public policy in the Delaware-Maryland Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We are a faith community with three judicatories in every part of our State.

Our community has advocated for just labor policies since 1999 (“Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood”, ELCA). A 2017 message among us concerning human rights as principle and instrument, affirmed a 1999 ELCA statement about justice in the *oikos*, the economy.

Enabling and practicing child labor for commercial advantage is explicitly intended injustice. Children have no competence or legal standing to engage in labor negotiation, contracts, employment agreement. The purpose of child labor is to defeat public regulation of markets and collapse floors under the value of labor. It is a violation of Hebrew Scripture prophetic injunctions against economic exploitation (e.g. see Amos 8:6).

Child labor is becoming a mainstreamed business model again in the U.S. *oikos* with an accelerant from Covid. The United States passed laws to regulate and narrow child labor after decades of Industrial Revolution horrors, accompanied with violence, a century ago. We are very glad to join any that want there be a sense of this General Assembly that facilitating reestablishment of commercial child labor is wrong, unjust, and illegal.

For those reasons we support **House Resolution 7** and ask your favorable report.

Lee Hudson