



**Maryland Commission
on LGBTQIA+ Affairs**

**TESTIMONY OF JEREMY BROWNING
DIRECTOR, MARYLAND COMMISSION ON LGBTQIA+ AFFAIRS
FAVORABLE STATEMENT ON HB0050
COMMISSION ON HISTORY, CULTURE, AND CIVICS IN EDUCATION**

January 17, 2024

Ways and Means Committee

The Hon. Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair
The Hon. Jheanelle K. Wilkins, Vice Chair

Chair Atterbeary, Vice-Chair Wilkins, and members of the Ways and Means Committee, my name is Jeremy Browning(he/him), and I am the Director of the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs. I am honored to testify today in strong support of House Bill 50, which seeks to establish the Commission on History, Culture, and Civics in Education. This bill, introduced by Delegate Acevero, is a critical step towards fostering a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of the history, culture, and civics of the United States and Maryland within our education system.

The establishment of this Commission is particularly commendable as it recognizes the need to amplify the voices and contributions of historically marginalized communities, including LGBTQIA+ communities. By including representation from Maryland's Indigenous American tribes, differently-abled community, ethnic communities, and LGBTQIA+ communities, this new Commission aims to reflect the rich diversity of our state.

This bill is a top priority for the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs and is aligned with their Recommendations to Support LGBTQIA+ Students which was adopted unanimously by the Commission and has been submitted along with my testimony. The 2021 GLSEN National School Climate Survey reveals that LGBTQ students who attend school with an LGBTQIA+-inclusive curriculum reported decreased instances of biased language, increased GPAs, higher levels of self-esteem, decreased levels of depression, and increased interest in post-secondary education. Despite these

benefits, only 26.7% of LGBTQIA+ youth in Maryland were taught positive representations of LGBTQ+ people, history, or events.

The bill also highlights the importance of intersectionality, acknowledging the contributions and challenges faced by individuals who belong to multiple minority groups. This holistic approach to understanding our history and culture is essential in fostering a more inclusive educational environment.

In conclusion, House Bill 50 is a groundbreaking initiative that aligns with Maryland's commitment to an inclusive and equitable education system. By establishing the Commission on History, Culture, and Civics in Education, we can work towards a more comprehensive and accurate representation of our diverse history. I urge the Ways and Means Committee to support this vital piece of legislation.