



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

Testimony Prepared for the
Appropriations Committee
on
House Bill 37
January 28, 2025
Position: **Favorable**

Mister Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to support the dignity of human effort by supporting a right to organize and bargain collectively. 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 supports a human right to organize and bargain collectively in the interest of fair wages and safe and just working conditions. A 2017 message among us concerning human rights as principle and instrument affirmed a 1999 ELCA statement about this element of justice in the *oikos*, the economy (see *Human Rights*, ELCA 2017; *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All*, ELCA 1999).

We said this in 2017: *Humans are economic beings and have the right to participate fully in an economy where resources are justly allocated with a view to sustainability. Humans may not be treated as commodities.* The fundament of all human rights for us is a spiritual recognition of the dignity that inheres in humans as a gift of creation, the holy image proclaimed by God in the Genesis creation story of human life.

Among the pillars of economic justice, we've agreed is, *(t)he principle of participation... (i.e) all are entitled to be heard and to have their interests considered when decisions are made.* Support for the right to organize and bargain is in the written record of predecessor bodies of our church going back at least to the 1930s; it has been law in the United States since the passage of the National Labor Relations Act in 1935; and it is in the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (see especially Articles 23 and 25, most especially 23-4: *Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests*).

We support an effort to make organizing and bargaining with other workers, collectively, a right stipulated by the Maryland Constitution. We support **House Bill 37** and ask your favorable report.

Lee Hudson