



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

Testimony Prepared for the  
**Appropriations Committee**  
on  
**House Bill 661**  
March 24, 2025  
Position: **Favorable**

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to support the dignity of human effort by acknowledging the human 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 human rights for working people, including a right to organize and bargain collectively in the interest of fair wages and safe and just work conditions.

A 2017 message among us concerning human rights as principle and instrument, affirmed a 1999 ELCA statement about justice in the *oikos*, the economy. Among the pillars of economic justice is, *(t)he principle of participation (meaning) 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 the predecessor bodies of our church going back at least to the 1930s; it is in the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and it has been law in the United States since 1935.

We have supported previous Senate iterations of this bill, and do so now for **House Bill 661**. Establishing a protocol that gives employees of the State's higher education system the right to bargain collectively meets a criterion for a just economy, we believe. We encourage your favorable report.

Lee Hudson