



**Maryland Commission
on LGBTQIA+ Affairs**

Bill Title: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - The American Dream

Bill Number(s): [HJ0004](#)/[SJ0003](#)

Position: FAVORABLE

Date: March 3, 2025

Submitted by: Jeremy Browning, Director of the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs

To:

House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee

The Hon. Anne Healey, Chair
The Hon. Marvin E. Holmes, Jr., Vice Chair

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

The Hon. Brian J. Feldman, Chair
The Hon. Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair

Testimony on behalf of the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs:

The Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs, created by the Maryland General Assembly, works to serve LGBTQIA+ Marylanders by galvanizing community voices, researching and addressing challenges, and advocating for policies that advance equity and inclusion. The Commission envisions a Maryland where all LGBTQIA+ people can live full and authentic lives. As a vital resource, the Commission collaborates with public officials, agencies, and community partners to ensure the rights and dignity of LGBTQIA+ Marylanders are protected and respected.

The Commission submits this testimony in support of HJ0004 and SJ0003, which reaffirms Maryland's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) as a core foundation of the American Dream. At a time when DEI efforts face increasing opposition nationwide, this resolution sends a clear message that Maryland values opportunity, prosperity, and upward mobility for all. It encourages individuals, organizations, government agencies, and businesses to uphold DEI principles that foster inclusivity and fairness.

For many LGBTQIA+ Marylanders, particularly those who are Black, Indigenous, people of color, women, and members of other marginalized communities, the American Dream has often felt out of reach due to systemic barriers in education, healthcare, employment, housing, and civic participation. DEI efforts are essential in removing these obstacles and ensuring opportunities are based on merit and potential rather than race, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability status, or economic background.

DEI policies and practices are imperative for the full participation of LGBTQIA+ individuals, especially transgender, nonbinary, and gender-diverse people with intersectional marginalized identities. LGBTQIA+ communities face unique and compounded forms of discrimination that often exclude them from essential services, economic mobility, and safe public spaces. Without intentional efforts to remove systemic barriers and promote inclusive policies, LGBTQIA+ individuals will continue to experience disparities in health outcomes, educational attainment, and employment opportunities. Affirming DEI ensures that all Marylanders, regardless of identity, can contribute to and benefit from a thriving and just society.

Attempts to roll back DEI initiatives threaten to undermine hard-fought progress, harm marginalized communities, and weaken Maryland's ability to remain a competitive and inclusive state. HJ0004 and SJ0003 affirms that Maryland will continue to lead in fostering an environment where all individuals can thrive.

For those reasons, the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs respectfully urges a favorable report on HJ0004 and SJ0003.