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—
Vice Chair
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Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee
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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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SB24: "Faith Institutions"

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Thursday, February 6, 2025 1:00 PM

In our increasingly diverse society, it is important that our laws reflect and respect all faith traditions. Our law books include 142 uses of the word "church," including as a stand-in for all places of worship; this is simply inaccurate and implies that other religions are less significant.

[SB24](#) would standardize the use of terms in the Maryland Code. When a house of worship or religious organization is mentioned, it would be replaced with "faith institution" (although Churchville, MD should not be referred to as "faith institution-ville":)).

This legislation also updates nine instances from the term "clergyman" to "member of the clergy" to include all religious leaders-- regardless of gender.

Standardizing this terminology corrects implicit bias towards the dominant religion and ensures that all faiths are treated with equal dignity and respect under the law.

I urge a favorable report on SB24.