



TESTIMONY FOR SB0490

State Boards, Committees, Commissions, Task Forces, and Workgroups – Elimination of Citizenship Requirements and Establishment of Diversity Requirements

Bill Sponsor: Senator Kagan

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0490 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

We are supposed to have a representative democracy and yet, we don't allow everyone to participate. The bodies that we rely on for advice and recommendations for legislative and other actions that affect everyone in the state too often are staffed entirely by white men – even those bodies that make recommendations that affect women.

This bill is not only welcome, it is long past due. It eliminates the citizenship requirement for all state boards, commissions, Committees, Task Forces, and Workgroups. This will allow for all residents to have a voice. Additionally, it requires, as much as practical, for all these bodies to reflect the full diversity of the state. This can only make things better for everyone. We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.