



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

****FAVORABLE****

SUPPORT OF SB 342

Voting Rights Act of 2025 - Counties and Municipalities

TO: Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair, Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair and the members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

FROM: Rev. Linda K. Boyd, Co-Chair, Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network, Diocese of Maryland

DATE: February 26, 2025

The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland strongly supports this Bill. As a Church, we advocate for measures that preserve and expand voters' rights. In Resolution 2018-D003, our National Church stated as follows:

Resolved, That this 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church hereby calls on all states to cease and desist efforts to suppress the voting rights of American Citizens; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church calls on governments on all levels to create policies to enhance voter participation by, among other strategies, seeking to implement policies that will increase early voting, extend registration periods, guarantee an adequate number of voting locations, allow absentee balloting without the necessity of having an excuse, and prohibit forms of identification that restrict voter participation; and be it further

Resolved, That in accordance with Executive Council Resolution AN033 adopted October 25, 2017, the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church reaffirms that one person one vote means that the votes of all citizens of all races and ethnicities are fairly represented, counted and accounted for; that we oppose any form of partisan gerrymandering which has the same effect of racial gerrymandering; and be it further

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention call upon the National Conference of State Legislators to address gerrymandering as a major focus in developing a fair, not gerrymandered electoral process.

This Bill takes important steps to preserve voting rights in Maryland. Every person deserves an equal opportunity to express themselves via their vote. We must oppose any attempt to exclude someone, especially members of a protected class.

The Diocese of Maryland requests a favorable report.