

TESTIMONY ON HB 822

Declaration of Rights - Religious Freedom, Religious Tests, and Oaths and Affirmations

March 4, 2025

Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice-Chair Cullison, and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

My name is Daniel Golombek I am a resident of District 11B and I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 822.

HB 822 serves the purpose of altering and removing references to God from certain provisions relating to religious freedom, religious tests, and oaths and affirmations by proposing amendments to the Maryland Constitution, Declaration of Rights, Article 36, 37, and 39.

Our Constitution starts "We the people of the United States," and goes on as a secular declaration in which all references to a deity are exclusionary. Article VI says, "but no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States;" and its First Amendment goes on "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion." The language in the Maryland Constitution has been deemed unconstitutional *but never removed*. It is time that the state constitution be amended to delete this unconstitutional language.

Thank you for your consideration and I strongly urge a FAVORABLE report on HB 822.

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