



**Delaware-Maryland Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

Testimony Prepared for the  
**Rules and Executive Nominations Committee**  
on  
**House Resolution 3**  
March 3, 2025  
Position: **Favorable**

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to support human rights. I am Lee Hudson, assistant to the bishop for public policy in the Delaware-Maryland Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We are a faith community with three judicatories in every part of our State.

Our community has advocated for just labor policies since 1999 (“Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood”, ELCA). A 2017 message among us concerning human rights as principle and instrument, affirmed a 1999 ELCA statement about justice in the *oikos*, the economy.

Enabling and practicing child labor for commercial advantage is an explicit injustice. Children have no competence or legal standing to engage in labor negotiation, contracts, employment agreement. The purpose of child labor is to defeat public regulation of markets and collapse floors under the value of labor. That is a violation of Hebrew Scripture prophetic injunctions against economic exploitation (e.g. see Amos 8:6).

Child labor is again being practiced in some business communities in the U.S. *oikos*. The United States passed laws to regulate and narrow child labor after decades of Industrial Revolution horrors, accompanied with violence, more than a century ago. We are very glad to join any effort to proscribe it again and to oppose its normalization as a business practice. We hope the sense of this General Assembly is that facilitating a reestablishment of commercial child labor is morally wrong, unjust, and illegal.

For those reasons we support **House Resolution 3** and ask your favorable report.

Lee Hudson