



TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO SB 0287:

****UNFAVORABLE****

**Criminal Law - Interference With Access to or Egress From a
Religious Facility – Prohibition**

TO: Senator William C. Smith, Chair, Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair and the members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

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

DATE: January 30, 2025

At its national convention in 2018, the Episcopal Church adopted Resolution No. 2018-C009, entitled, “Urge Church to Become a Sanctuary in Support of Immigrants” and stated the following:

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church, in obedience to the many biblical injunctions imploring us not to wrong or oppress the alien in our midst and Jesus' own mandate to extend care for the stranger, and in accordance with our Baptismal Covenant, reaffirms resolution 2015-D057 supporting the New Sanctuary Movement; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church urge its members, as people of faith and people of conscience, pledge to challenge and question any unjust immigration law, policy, or practice that is inconsistent with our biblical mandate to "not wrong or oppress a resident alien" (Exodus 22:21); and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church recommend that its institutions and congregations become places of welcome, refuge, healing, and other forms of material and pastoral support for those targeted for deportation due to immigration status or some perceived status of difference, and that we work alongside our friends, families, and neighbors to ensure the dignity and human rights of all people; and be it further



Resolved, That The Episcopal Church encourage its members to connect with local and national sanctuary communities and institutions, faith-based coalitions, and immigrant rights groups and coalitions, and engage in educating, organizing, advocacy, and direct action, and other methods as deemed appropriate in each context, to ensure the safety, security, and due process for immigrants, with a focus on keeping families together of the undocumented community, and to assist in equipping congregations, clergy and lay leaders to engage in such work, appropriate to local contexts, capacity, and discernment; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church affirm our church's support for U.S. executive policies that deemphasize immigrant enforcement action against those who have not committed felony crimes, and reaffirm our church's support for congressional action for comprehensive and just reform of the broken U.S. immigration system as called for in General Convention resolution 2009-B006: "to allow undocumented immigrants who have established roots in the United States and are often parents and spouses of U.S. Citizens to have a pathway to legalization and to full social and economic integration in to the United States."

Following this Resolution, the Episcopal Church of Maryland respectfully requests an unfavorable report.