



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 0197:

****FAVORABLE****

**Public Schools—Restorative Practices Schools-
Comprehensive Plan**

TO: Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair, Delegate Jheanelle K. Wilkins, Vice Chair and the members of the House Ways and Means Committee

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

DATE: January 29, 2025

The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland strongly supports this bill. Restorative practices have been overwhelmingly successful in every area in which they are used. An essential need of every person is to feel that s/he is seen and heard. These practices fundamentally respect each person who is involved, whether that person is a person of authority, or a student. Such practices operate to respect each person who is involved, and each person feels as if s/he has been given a chance to express themselves and be heard. Because these practices include listening to each person who is involved, that person feels valued and recognized. The dignity of each person is thus preserved.

These practices avoid the destructive practice of demeaning a person rather than the usual approach that uses a system of right and wrong. Instead of focusing on positions, such practices focus on interests. If each party involved can focus on his/her interest rather than position, that can move the entire process to focus on meeting each other's interests. Focusing on positions destroys bridges; focusing on interests preserves bridges and relationships where no party is "right" or "wrong."

Restorative practices have been successfully used in legal matters and in family matters. They are even more appropriate in school settings where children are involved. We must model for them appropriate dispute resolution methods.

We respectfully request a favorable report.