



TESTIMONY

SB0417 – Labor and Employment – Mandatory Meetings on Religious or Political Matters – Employee Attendance and Participation

Bill Sponsor: Senator Lam

Committee: Finance

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, Cochair

Position: **FAVORABLE**

I am submitting this testimony in support of SB0417 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. We are an association of unpaid citizen advocates—individuals and grassroots groups in every district—representing more than 30,000 Marylanders.

SB0417 protects workers from being required to attend employer-mandated meetings where the employer expresses political or religious views. These “captive-audience meetings” put workers in an unfair position, forcing them to sit through opinions they may not share and creating an atmosphere of pressure, coercion, or fear of retaliation. No one should have to choose between their job and their personal beliefs.

This bill allows employees to decide for themselves whether to participate in these discussions without risking their employment or workplace standing. It preserves freedom of belief, reduces intimidation, and strengthens basic worker rights. SB0417 also includes clear enforcement mechanisms so employees have a meaningful way to file complaints if their rights are violated. By setting statewide standards, the bill promotes fairness, transparency, and respect in Maryland workplaces.

SB0417 directly supports the mission of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. Our work is rooted in civic empowerment and ensuring Marylanders can be free of such coercion. When workers are pressured into political or religious conversations under threat of reprisal, their voices are diminished at work and beyond. This bill helps protect workers’ freedom.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a **FAVORABLE** report on SB0417.