



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 417

Labor and Employment - Mandatory Meetings on Religious or Political Matters - Employee Attendance and Participation (Maryland Worker Freedom Act)

FAVORABLE

TO: Senator Pamela Beidle, Chair; Senator Antonio Hayes, Vice-Chair and the members of the Senate Finance Committee

FROM: The Rev. Ken Phelps, Jr., member of the Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network (MEPPN)

DATE: February 18, 2026

The Episcopal Church believes in the free practice of religion and “encourages all Episcopalians and all people of good will to ponder anew the horror of religious bigotry and rededicate themselves to purging from their own souls and society all traces of such racism and religious bigotry, including and especially anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.” Episcopalians are called to remember, in prayer and action, that God creates all humankind equal, that God enlightens every human who enters the world – bidden or unbidden - and that God as Spirit goes where it wants, and not in accordance with divisions contrived by humans, and that racism and religious bigotry are utterly incompatible with belief in Christ -- a fact all Christians must each reflect in word and deed.

We also believe that freedom of religion is also freedom *from* religion. The same extends to the political ideologies. People are entitled to their own opinions – even bad ones – but not to the extent that they bring physical, emotional, economic or spiritual harm to another. This bill would give workers recourse when confronted by religious bias and bigotry or political intimidation in the workplace.

The Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network requests a favorable report

The Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network (MEPPN) is a ministry of The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland, The Episcopal Diocese of Washington, and The Delaware-Maryland Synod ELCA