



TESTIMONY

HB0649 – Advancing Equal Educational Opportunities for All Students in Maryland

Bill Sponsor: Chair, Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

Committee: House Government, Labor, and Elections

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, Co-Chair

Position: **FAVORABLE**

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am submitting this testimony in support of **HB0649** on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. We are an association of unpaid citizen advocates—individuals and grassroots groups in every district across the state—representing and supporting more than 30,000 Marylanders.

HB0649 strengthens Maryland’s commitment to equal access in education by authorizing the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights to enforce prohibitions against discrimination and retaliation in educational institutions. It sets standards, outlines the Commission’s authority. More importantly, this bill gives individuals a private right of action when discrimination occurs.

Maryland must hold firm against efforts at the federal level to roll back diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. Education is the foundation of good governance, and protecting equitable access to it is essential to a healthy democracy.

HB0649 aligns directly with the mission of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. Our work centers on transparency, equity, and civic empowerment. Ensuring that every student has a fair chance to learn supports the informed, engaged communities we strive to build.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a **FAVORABLE** report on **HB0649**.