

SB 172

Favorable

House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

March 31, 2026

I respectfully urge a favorable report on Maryland Senate Bill 172. This legislation offers a fair and thoughtful solution for churches that are seeking to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church while honoring the investments made over generations. Our church property was built more than 100 years ago by the ancestors of our current congregation, and since that time, our members alone have faithfully funded its construction, maintenance, insurance, and ongoing improvements. We have not received financial support from the United Methodist Conference for these costs.

The trust clause, while historical in nature, no longer reflects present-day realities and creates an inequitable situation for local churches. SB 172 allows for a fair resolution that acknowledges both stewardship and responsibility, ensuring that congregations are not placed in an unreasonable or restrictive position as they discern their future. I respectfully ask for your support on behalf of our church families across Maryland, as we seek a path forward that is fair, respectful, and just.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna G. Foxwell