

City Harbor Church 3451 Falls Road Baltimore MD 21211

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February 16, 2026

HB 722

Position: UNFAVORABLE

SENT VIA MY MGA

Maryland General Assembly
House Judiciary Committee
Attn: Del. J. Sandy Dartlett, Chair
Attn: Del. Debra Davis, Vice Chair

Re: *HB 722 Child Sex Abuse Claims – Doctrine of Charitable Immunity – Abrogation*

Dear Madam Chair, Madam Vice Chair & Members of the Committee:

I am Benjamin Malmin, Senior Pastor of City Harbor Church. We are a Maryland religious corporation and are located at 3451 Falls Road, Baltimore, MD 21211. I am writing concerning House Bill 722 Child Sex Abuse Claims – Doctrine of Charitable Immunity – Abrogation. The position of City Harbor Church, and the members of its congregation, for HB 722 is unfavorable (UNF).

City Harbor Church, was formed on March 2, 2011 has been in existence since. It operates as a local church strictly as a 501 c 3 charitable and educational religious organization. We serve Hampden, Waverly, and the surrounding neighborhoods with relevant programs for people of all ages. We are supported by the donations of our members. For 7 years we have provided 12 step programs within Department of Corrections facilities. For the worst 18 months of the pandemic we organized a dozen non-profit charitable organizations and churches to distribute 1.4 million pounds of groceries and fresh produce to those with needs from the Weinberg Y Waverly YMCA parking lots. When able we provide clothing and support to those with no fixed abode. We have also provided services, comfort, and special events for the mothers of murder victims. We have provided a number of funerals/memorials for community members free of charge. Additionally, for 8 years I served as an official Baltimore City Police Chaplain.

We have for years relied upon Maryland's charitable immunity protection in maintaining our work and ordering our finances. Our congregation counts on having their contributions go towards the mission of the church and its ministries. We are able to provide the services that we do to our congregation and our community because of it.

HB 722 is deeply unfair and harmful to charities. City Harbor Church has relied upon the doctrine of charitable immunity since it was formed March 2, 2011. This reliance has dictated whether we have obtained insurance, coverage limits, and coverage exclusions. Maryland has

now removed any statute of limitations for child sex offense cases. The abrogation of charitable immunity would compound the effects of the removal of the statute of limitations for child sex abuse cases and requires charities to defend cases where the alleged abusers and supervisors are often long deceased, witnesses are missing, and records are lost due to passage of time.

The impact of this bill is not only on our ongoing ministries, but on our very existence. One substantial liability claim could well end our ministry altogether, resulting in a loss to our community of the services that we freely provide.

We also believe that this bill violates our constitution rights as citizens of Maryland and of the United States. We and other charities have reasonably relied upon the assurance of immunity beyond the limited of their insurance in planning their affairs and arranging insurance. The retroactive removal of immunity covering cases dating back 80 years or more is an act of betrayal by the State that violates the fundamental principles of due process.

Our church leadership, our congregation, and we believe our community strongly opposes HB 722. We are writing to voice our opposition and ask that the bill be defeated.

Thank you for your attention and we are available for questions and discussion as needed.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Malmin, Pastor
City Harbor Church