



[Secular Coalition for Maryland](http://secular.org) Secular Coalition for
America <http://secular.org>

February 26, 2020

The Honorable Delores G. Kelley

Finance Committee

3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SUPPORT SB0738 (HB1120) Health Care Providers and Health Benefit Plans -
Discrimination in Provision of Services

Chairwoman and Members of the Committee:

The Secular Coalition for Maryland welcomes this bill requiring all health care providers uphold reasonable, common sense non-discrimination standards. Invidious discrimination hurts us as a society, it divides people and impedes people from realizing their potential. The health care sector in particular, because of its importance, has a responsibility to not engage in counterproductive discrimination. All people who need medical care should be able to obtain needed health care without worrying about being mistreated or denied service.

Discrimination in health care settings can endanger people's lives through delays or denials of medically necessary care. Alternatives may not be easily accessible for patients that seek medical care and are turned away by providers. This concern is exacerbated by a shortage of medical providers in key areas of treatment and some geographic areas (such as rural communities).

The Affordable Care Act Section 1557 prohibits health care providers (and insurance companies) from engaging in discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Section 1557 applies to any health program or activity any part of which received

funding from HHS or that HHS itself administers. Unlike the ACA, this bill protects everyone everywhere in Maryland.