



# THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

## SUPPORT HB 1010

### Health Care Facilities (LGBTQ Senior Bill of Rights) Health and Government Operations Committee

Good afternoon Chair Pendergrass, Vice-Chair Pena-Melnyk, members of the Health and Government Operations Committee, my name is Linda Boyd and today, I represent the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland. The Diocese represents 108 parishes and over 45,000 parishioners stretching from Western Maryland to Calvert County. The Maryland Episcopal Diocese supports HB 1010.

HB 1010 would establish a Bill of Rights for seniors living in long-term care facilities, ensuring that they are treated respectfully and appropriately. Maryland's LGBTQ seniors built the modern LGBTQ community and were on the front lines of so many battles to expand their civil rights and fight the AIDS epidemic. They deserve to age with dignity and respect, and that means making sure Maryland's long-term care facilities have culturally competent policies and procedures in place. Our community of LGBTQ seniors is growing, and as more LGBTQ people reach senior status, we need to ensure that our laws recognize that reality. While LGBTQ seniors face many of the same challenges that all seniors face, they also face unique challenges with regard to discrimination, health, and potential lack of family support systems.

We strongly believe that each person is a child of God, deserving of equal dignity and respect. All seniors should be treated with dignity and respect regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or HIV status.

We respectfully request a favorable report.