



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

SUPPORT

HB 159

Economic Justice and Racial Reconciliation Act

Health and Government Operations

Testimony presented by Rev. Kathy Shahinian

2/01/2022

The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland strongly supports HB159

The intent of HB 159 Economic Justice and Racial Reconciliation Act is to establish the Commission for Economic Justice and Reconciliation that will study racial disparities in wealth and resources as a result of tax laws and systems in place in the State from the Reconstruction Era through the enactment of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964.

In Maryland, the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland's work for reconciliation is a fundamental calling for all. Reconciliation builds on our understanding of history, provides energy for the present, and forms the foundation to our future as faithful members of the body of Christ.

HB 159 will serve to focus on enhancing existing efforts to eradicate racism, researching the history of slavery and the disparity in wealth and resources as a result of tax laws.

HB 159 is an opportunity to rectify the many racial disparities in wealth that exist and begin the healing for our society.

We encourage a favorable report.



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE
OF MARYLAND

SUPPORT
HB 122

Criminal Procedure – Expungement of Records – Expansion

Judiciary
Testimony presented by Rev. Kathy Shahinian
2/01/2022

Having a criminal record can severely limit one's access to employment, education, housing, civic engagement, and public assistance. Nearly 9 in 10 employers, 4 in 5 property owners, and 3 in 5 colleges use background checks to screen for applicants' criminal records, and one study found more than 45,000 federal and state statutes and regulations impose disqualifications or disadvantages or disadvantages on individuals with a conviction. Even when there isn't a conviction, an arrest records decreases a person's employment prospects more than other common employment- related stigmas. Additionally, the collateral damage of having a criminal record reaches across generations, as the socioeconomic barriers associated with a parent's criminal record can harm a child's long-term well-being and outcomes.

These represent disproportionately high rates as criminal records can be used to target noncitizens for deportation, severing familial ties within migrant communities. The U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice has found that inadequacies in the accuracy and completeness of criminal history records are the single most serious deficiency affecting the Nation's criminal history record information system and that many of the criminal history records currently circulated by the repositories are difficult to decipher, particularly by noncriminal justice users. We encourage a favorable report.