

**Baptist Ministers' Night Conference of
Baltimore and Vicinity (BMNCBV)**

5405 York Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21212, (443) 386.4739



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 59
BEFORE THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**BY REV. DR. SANDRA CONNER, PRESIDENT, BMNCBV
February 1, 2023**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony for a very important health bill that will help small employers and their employees get connected with high quality health coverage for their employees. Baptist Ministers' Night Conference of Baltimore and Vicinity is an organization that strives to equip faith leaders with resources to do "Holistic" ministries to serve their congregants, as well as benefits, i.e., health, for their employees.

BMNCBV acknowledge that Maryland has some of the best health systems in the country. It is our understanding that it is ranked 5th in the nation for having the best healthcare system; and we applaud this achievement. However, we believe more can and should be done to improve access to healthcare/coverage and to reduce inequities.

Many small organizations, including faith-based organizations, and their employees do not know about the health coverage programs available to them. This legislation would create an outreach program which would help with education and training around the available options, including existing subsidy programs for small business and individuals. This is a matter of health equity, as Maryland has the highest rate per-capita of businesses owned by people of color in the country, and disparities in access in health coverage continue to persist by race and ethnicity. This health disparity, like many others, is discussed on an ongoing basis and solutions are continually researched to improve the quality of life for our members and the people of the communities we serve.

We believe this bill, SB 59, will make some improvements in health coverage and access to healthcare for not only the small business owners we serve, but also our employees. BMNCBV will support this bill to create an outreach program for small employers and their employees to get connected with health coverage as one of our top priorities for the 2022 Maryland General Assembly session. We pray that our legislators will heed our call.

We thank you in advance for your actions towards SB 59.

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