

Episcopal Diocese
of Washington



Diócesis Episcopal
de Washington

The Hon. William Smith, Jr.
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee
The Senate
Maryland General Assembly
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Submitted electronically

RE: SB0429 (cross-filed with HB0391)

Dear Chair Smith:

I am writing in support of SB0429, entitled “Corporations and Associations – Protestant Episcopal Church, Diocese of Washington.”

I serve as the Ninth Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington. Our Diocese comprises 86 Episcopal congregations located in Charles, Montgomery, Prince George’s, and St. Mary’s Counties in Maryland, and in the District of Columbia.

I urge the General Assembly to pass SB0429 in order to help our parishes with their corporate governance. If passed, SB0429 will permit these parishes to be organized under the religious corporations article of the Maryland Corporations and Associations law, the same as Episcopal churches in other parts of Maryland (the Diocese of Maryland and the Diocese of Easton). This will also provide the same treatment as churches of other denominations. SB0429 would repeal obsolete provisions of the “Maryland Vestry Act” that date back to the 1700s. These uncodified statutes make it difficult for our parishes to establish their legal existence, complicating routine tasks like opening bank accounts or applying for grants.

Should you have any questions, please contact either The Rev. Andrew Walter, Canon to the Ordinary and Chief Operating Officer of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington (202-537-6530, awalter@edow.org), or John Van De Weert, the Chancellor of the Diocese (202-577-1912, jvandeweert@sidley.com).

Sincerely,

The Rt. Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde
Bishop of Washington