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Operations Committee

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Government Operations
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Insurance and Pharmaceuticals



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of House Bill 394: Human Relations—Commission on Civil Rights—

Appeal of Final Order

February 13th, 2024

Good afternoon, Madam Chair, Madam Vice-Chair and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee. I'm Delegate Pam Guzzone representing Howard County's District 13 and I am here in support of House Bill 394 which will restore the right to appeal a finding of no probable cause to pursue a complaint of discrimination in a public accommodation filed with the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights.

This bill is a simple clarification of the law governing the process when appeals from the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights may be elevated beyond the Circuit Court. The panel will share the events that lead to the need for the clarification. (I am not a lawyer so will leave that to them.) However, even as a non-lawyer, I know this clarification is necessary; it will provide Marylanders suffering discrimination an additional level of judicial review – past the circuit court – by specifically stating that reconsideration of a finding of no probable cause by the Maryland Commission of Civil Rights is appealable as provided in the Administrative Procedures Act. This is the standard process for other administrative proceedings, and, as you will hear, was commonly believed to be the case for the Maryland Commission of Civil Rights too.

Again, this is a straightforward bill that makes something everyone believed to be a statutory right appeal to actually be a statutory right. I respectfully request a favorable report for HB 394.