



HB0257 – Maryland Commission on Civil Rights – Employment Discrimination - Reporting

Presented to the Hon. Shane Pendergrass and
Members of the House Health & Government Operations Committee
February 11, 2021 4:00 p.m.

POSITION: SUPPORT

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges the House Health and Government Operations Committee to issue a **favorable report on HB0257 - Maryland Commission on Civil Rights – Employment Discrimination - Reporting**, sponsored by Delegate Lily Qi.

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice and we recognize that economic security is intrinsically tied to our right to decide if, when, or how to start or add to our families. Every Marylander, regardless of their gender, race, or pregnancy status, deserves the right to work without fear of discrimination, and to be treated with respect and dignity.

While employees can currently report discrimination cases to the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights, there is no requirement for the Commission to use the data to create new policies or policy recommendations. Further, several county offices of civil rights do not submit the information they gather in a coherent, organized way that can be easily tracked and studied. Results from the Commission's 2019 annual report shows that employees who identify as female are more likely to report employment discrimination. Further, harassment and sex-based and race-based discrimination remain prevalent complaints. A lack of comprehensive data from each county makes it difficult to track employment discrimination against pregnant people. Without accurate statewide data, we cannot analyze the trends of pregnancy discrimination or the efficacy of policies addressing the issue. A lack of data-centered analysis and recommendation means that policy recommendations may fail to completely address newly-emerging trends or long-standing problems that data can reveal. Women of color and other vulnerable populations in Maryland deserve to work in safe environments, and using the Commission's own data to create policy recommendations will better serve these marginalized populations.

HB0257 will allow the statewide Commission to collect accurate and up to date information from each county, demonstrating statewide trends of employment discrimination. With accurate information and an expectation to use data to create policies, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights will have the tools they need to create responsive and effective policy recommendations to help women of color and pregnant people.

Vulnerable populations like women of color and pregnant people often face workplace discrimination, and data from the Commission itself reflects the need to create policies based on these trends. When officials can collect accurate statewide data and use the trends reflected to create policy, we can create a more equitable experience for all those working to take care of themselves and their families. For these reasons, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges a favorable committee report on bill HB0257**. Thank you for your time and consideration.