



March 20, 2017

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB 1175 – Discrimination by a Place of Public Accommodation – Enforcement and Remedies – Oppose

Dear Delegate Pendergrass:

House Bill 1175 amends the current state law prohibiting discrimination by a place of public accommodation by allowing a complainant to elect to have a claim asserting discrimination determined in a civil action. The bill also expands the remedies available for discrimination by a place of public accommodation. Current law provides for hearing before a Commissioner of the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights.

Remedies available under the current law are sufficient, and any effort to make filing such complaints profitable for a complainant seem inconsistent with the greater good of having such violations resolved. Adding these additional remedies over and above existing remedies, including any available under federal ADA and anti-discrimination laws is unnecessary and punitive.

The Department of Legislative Services notes that only 68 such claims were filed in 2016. The reasoning presented implies that more claims would be filed if there were monetary relief. While that is true, we believe it's equally as likely that few claims were filed because other adequate remedies were utilized in the few cases filed and that adding monetary relief will only increase frivolous claims.

The Carroll County Chamber of Commerce, a business advocacy organization of over 560 members, opposes this bill and therefore requests that you give it an unfavorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mike McMullin'.

Mike McMullin
President
Carroll County Chamber of Commerce

CC: Delegate Susan W. Krebs
Senator Justin Ready

**Carroll County Chamber of Commerce • 9 East Main Street • Westminster, MD 21157
Phone: 410-848-9050 • Fax: 410-876-1023 • www.carrollcountychamber.org**