



2526 SAINT PAUL STREET
BALTIMORE, MD 21218
TEL (410) 625-LGBT (5428)
FAX (410) 625-7423
www.freestate-justice.org

Bill: HB1382
Title: Children in Out-of-Home Placement – Placement in Medical Facilities
Date: February 27, 2020 1:00 p.m.
Committee: Appropriations Committee
Position: Support with Amendments

To the Honorable Delegate Maggie McIntosh and Esteemed Members of the Committee:

FreeState Justice is a statewide legal advocacy organization that seeks to improve the lives of low-income lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (“LGBTQ”) Marylanders. We work across Maryland to provide free civil legal aid to LGBTQ Marylanders with low incomes who are facing discrimination. Those clients include individuals who are in the foster care system or experiencing out-of-home placement.

FreeState Justice **supports HB1382 with amendments**, which establishes that the Department shall report certain information to the General Assembly that is disaggregated by county, placement type, age, sex, ethnicity, and amount of time overstayed, if youth experiencing housing instability are kept in an emergency facility or an inpatient facility, despite not needing medical care.

LGBTQ youth are overrepresented in unstable housing and the foster care system. For LGBTQ youth, disclosing their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression can lead to verbal and physical harassment, oftentimes resulting in out-of-home placement or homelessness. In 2019 a study found that 30.4% of youth in foster care identify as LGBTQ, with 5% as transgender¹. The same study reported that LGBTQ youth in out-of-home placements experience further mistreatment including verbal and physical abuse, and more frequent hospitalization for emotional and physical reasons. Discrimination of these youth in the foster care system and even in healthcare facilities has far more detrimental effects, usually leading to homelessness.

¹ Baams L, Wilson BDM, Russell ST. LGBTQ Youth in Unstable Housing and Foster Care. *Pediatrics*. 2019;143(3): e20174211

BOARD

Ronald C. Hokemeyer
President
Baltimore Gas & Electric, retired

Lee Westgate
Vice President
*University of Maryland
Behavior Health at Absolute Care*

Woody Derricks, CFP
Treasurer
Partnership Wealth Management

R. Eric Thomas
Secretary
ELLE.com

Vanessa Bowling-Avajon
*Hispanic Association on
Corporate Responsibility*

Lee Carpenter
Saul Ewing Arnstein and Lehr

Crystal Coache
Allovue

Michael DeStefano
University of Baltimore

Brianna January, MPP
Media Matters

Mala Malhotra-Ortiz, Esq.
Rianna Matthews-Brown

Joanne D. Rosen, Esq.
*Johns Hopkins University
Bloomberg School of Public Health*

Diane Stollenwerk, MPP
StollenWerks

Ebony Thompson, Esq.
Venable LLP

Jessica P. Weber, Esq.
Brown, Goldstein & Levy, LLP

The language of the bill should be amended to request data to be disaggregated by: county, placement type, age, sex, ethnicity, amount of time overstayed, **sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression**. This bill will increase data reporting of LGBTQ youth in out-of-home placement and foster care, giving us a better understanding on how to best support LGBTQ Marylanders.

FreeState Justice strongly urges the Committee to issue a favorable report with amendments on HB1382.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important legislation, and please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,
Mark A. Procopio
Executive Director