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**Bill:** HB1147  
**Title:** The Accessible to All Act  
**Date:** March 3, 2020  
**Committee:** Economic Matters  
**Position:** Support

To the Honorable Dereck E. Davis and Esteemed Members of the Committees:

FreeState Justice is Maryland's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) civil rights advocacy organization. Each year, we provide free legal services to hundreds of LGBTQ Marylanders facing discrimination. We strive to create an equitable Maryland where LGBTQ Marylanders can live full lives with dignity and respect in all spaces.

Currently, single occupancy restrooms exist in publicly owned buildings and places of public accommodation across Maryland. However, despite being completely enclosed restrooms with one toilet and a door that locks, some continue to have gendered images and language that exclude members of the Intersex, Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming community.

By mandating that public spaces and places of public accommodations remove exclusionary gendered signage, this bill will build a more inclusive and affirming community for intersex, transgender and gender non-conforming Marylanders. No longer will some Marylanders feel excluded or disrespected because of symbolic violence that renders them invisible. This bill makes a significant and important contribution to making our public spaces truly accessible, safe, and validating for all our citizens.

Public health and medical research has demonstrated how the seemingly small symbolic exclusions and violence faced by minorities in everyday life compound, leading to increased stress and disproportionately negative health outcomes. Therefore, removing exclusionary symbols, at little to no cost, can be a positive step in remedying health disparities.

We strongly support this legislation and urge you to vote favorably.

Sincerely,

Mark A. Procopio  
Executive Director

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