

HB0361 Certificates of Birth - Issuance of New Certificates -
Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act) 2023

Sponsored by

Delegates Smith, Acevero, Boyce, Charkoudian, Edelson, Fair, Kaiser, Lehman, R. Lewis, Palakovich Carr, Simpson, Solomon, Stewart, Vogel, and Wells

Position: Favorable

Dear Honorable Delegates, Chair Peña-Melnyk and Members of the Health & Government Operations Committee,

My name is Rachel Rene Smith. I am a resident of Baltimore County and I serve the community as a Behavioral Health Therapist in Baltimore City who works with transgender adults, children, and families. I support HB0361, and I urge the Committee to issue a **favorable** report. This legislation will help transgender people and others who wish to self-select the gender marker on their Maryland birth certificate issued by the Division of Vital Records; or those who want to list an X gender marker on their Maryland birth certificate. It will also help transgender parents who need to update their names on their own child(ren)'s Maryland birth certificate after a legal name change.

HB0361 is important because it will increase safety, health, and wellness for transgender people and their families, all of whom rely on an accurate birth certificate for many vital functions including but not limited to: obtaining health or life insurance coverage, obtaining a U.S. passport, enrolling in school, (and most relevant to my work), parents or guardians ability to obtain for their children medical or behavioral health care services. It will eliminate the burden on clinicians such as myself to provide Maryland Department of Vital Records with a written form or statement so that a person can change their gender marker on their birth certificate. This should be self-select, just as it is in other states and on Maryland's photo IDs and other vital records. This bill will open access to so many who have otherwise been suffering. Many of the patients I work with have been negatively impacted by the absence of the equity that this bill is offering to bring.

Please vote **YES** on this life saving legislation to expand access to healthcare for transgender Marylanders.

In Unity,

Rachel Smith LCSW-C (pronouns: she/her and they/them), Behavioral Health Therapist, MD SW
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