



Testimony on HB361
Birth Certificate Modernization Act
Position: Favorable

To Chair Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Health & Government Operations Committee;

My name is Brige Dumais (pronouns: they/them) and I am the Political Coordinator of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. We represent over 10,000 members in Maryland/DC, and are the largest healthcare workers union in the nation. Our union represents members who work at LGBTQ community health centers, and members and staff who are LGBTQ+ themselves. We urge a **favorable** report on HB361: Birth Certificate Modernization Act.

What the bill does

- Enable transgender parents to prove they are related to their own children after they have been granted an order of legal name change through the Maryland Courts.
- Clarify that an X marker is permitted on Maryland certificates of birth.
- Ensure existing birth certificates previously issued by Maryland Department of Vital Statistics remain valid.
- Ease the administrative burden of accessing accurate documents for the transgender community, particularly low-income transgender people.
- Require attestation of gender on birth certificates to be made under penalty of perjury.

How this bill impacts healthcare workers

Under current policy, physicians must write and sign gender marker change forms. Enacting HB361 will reduce administrative burden on healthcare providers, allowing them to spend more time providing high quality healthcare to their patients.

How this bill impacts transgender patients

HB361 is gender affirming. Your committee recently heard extensive testimony on the positive impacts and medical necessity of gender affirming healthcare, including vast improvements in the mental health of transgender patients. Transgender people's mental health also improves with social affirmation like changing one's name and/or pronouns. This bill allows for additional gender categories of nonbinary, unspecified, and other for the sex designation, and makes it easier for transgender people to have legal documents that reflect their chosen name and/or pronouns.

Trans patients face a lot of barriers when it comes to accessing healthcare, including but not limited to challenges in using various systems like patient portal and/or attending medical or mental health appointments.

When this bill is enacted, any person who both lives in Maryland and was born in Maryland will not require medical or any other documentation for a gender marker change. This improves quality of life for transgender people and removes administrative tasks on overburdened healthcare providers. We urge a **favorable** report on this bill. Thank you.

In Unity,

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