

3010 BLUERIDGE AVE  
SILVER SPRING, MD 20902

703.609.1092  
EZRA.TOWNE@GMAIL.COM

Tuesday, February 21, 2023

**Testimony Favorable to HB0361:  
Certificates of Birth - Issuance of New Certificates - Sex Designation  
(Birth Certificate Modernization Act)**

Delegate Pena-Melnyk, Chair, Delegate Kelly, Vice-Chair, and esteemed members of the Health and Government Operations committee:

My name is Ezra Towne, and my pronouns are they/them. My testimony today is very personal in nature, and it's incredibly important to me that I share my story with you. I am an out transmasculine, non-binary person, an advocate and leader in my local trans community, a spouse, and a proud parent of two children. **I fully support HB0361 - and ask for a favorable report without amendments.**

I wasn't always named Ezra, and before adding children to our family, I didn't really mind the cognitive dissonance and accompanying need to write a different name on my legal documents. But when it came time to enroll my oldest child in school, the dysphoria of having a name I was known by and a legal name that didn't match became intolerable - and I legally changed my name.

However, this did not solve the problem of having a different name on my now 15 year old's birth certificate - one of the primary proofs of identity in legal matters. Both my children were born in Maryland, but now one child has an inaccurate birth certificate and the other does not.

At first glance, it looks like they have different parents. I also have to provide proof of my legal name change when requested if my relationship to my child is questioned. Not only is it woefully inconvenient to tote extra papers around, it is extremely distressing. Ezra is my name, and it feels like it has always been my name. It is unfair and discriminatory towards me, and others who are trans and/or non-binary - no one who gets married and changes their name has to prove their parenthood in the same way. Currently there is no clear path for trans and nonbinary Marylanders to update their own names on their children's birth certificates. HB0361 would change that.

EZRA MACLEOD TOWNE

---

3010 BLUERIDGE AVE  
SILVER SPRING, MD 20902

703.609.1092  
EZRA.TOWNE@GMAIL.COM

HB0361 would make it possible for transgender and/or non-binary parents (like me) to correct their children's birth certificates after they have been granted an order of legal name change through the Maryland Courts. It also clarifies that an X marker is permitted on Maryland certificates of birth, and ensures existing birth certificates issued by Maryland Department of Vital Statistics remain valid.

I believe that the people of Maryland, the free state, want to do better for trans and non-binary Marylanders. **I respectfully ask for a favorable report on HB0361 - the Birth Certificate Modernization Act - from the Health and Government Operations Committee.**

Sincerely,  
Mx. Ezra Towne  
District 18, Wheaton