

Good Afternoon, Honorable Chair Senator Smith, Vice Chair Waldstricher & Bill Sponsor Lam,

Thank you for the opportunity to address an important issue today. I want to request your support for the repeal of the unnatural and perverted sexual practices statute. Laws such as this have historically been used in oppressive ways to target the LGBTQIA+ community and to restrict sexual freedom among consenting adults.

My name is Glenda Rider. I've been an out, proud member of the queer community in Baltimore for over 35 years. In that time, I've seen over and over again how laws such as this statute have been used to target my friends & loved ones. I've seen people lose their jobs, face prosecution & have their families torn apart by antiquated laws like this one; laws that are grounded in a bigoted past but are still ruining people's lives today.

As a long time community organizer & mentor I have seen the people of Maryland grow in their acceptance & support of my community. This gives me hope that the next generation of LGBTQIA+ young adults, your constituents & neighbors, will be spared the fear, shame, & stigma of having their very identity criminalized.

In order to assure that future, I'm asking this committee to support Senate Bill 54. Doing so would provide needed protections for me, my family & my friends as well as affirm the freedom and liberties of all consenting adults across our great state. Thank you.