

February 25, 2025

Testimony on SB 733
CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS- GENDER NEUTRAL LANGUAGE
Education, Energy, Environment

Position: Favorable

Common Cause Maryland is in favor of SB 773, which would move to alter terminology in the Maryland Constitution so that constitutional officers would be regarded to in gender-neutral language.

This bill proposes an important yet straightforward change: updating terminology in the Maryland Constitution to reflect gender-neutral language when referring to constitutional officers.

Language matters. The words we use in our foundational documents shape public perception and reinforce inclusivity. Maryland's Constitution, as it stands, contains gendered references to public officials, which, while historically commonplace, do not reflect the diversity of leadership we see today. By adopting gender-neutral language, this bill ensures that all individuals, regardless of gender identity, feel represented and acknowledged within our state's governing framework.

This is not merely a symbolic gesture; it is a necessary step toward making Maryland's laws more inclusive and reflective of modern society. Government documents should serve all people equitably, and maintaining gender-specific language in reference to constitutional officers implicitly reinforces outdated assumptions about leadership roles. By modernizing the language of the Constitution, Maryland joins other states that have taken similar steps to promote gender inclusivity in their legal texts. Some of these states include California, New York, Vermont, Utah and others as well as several other states who are in the process of pushing for the same changes.

Additionally, this change aligns with our state's broader commitments to equality, diversity, and representation. It affirms that positions such as Governor, Attorney General, Comptroller, and Treasurer are open to all qualified individuals, regardless of gender. This bill is particularly important for young people who aspire to public service; they should see a Constitution that reflects the reality that leadership is not confined to a single gender.

Moreover, this amendment comes with minimal practical disruption. It does not alter the function or responsibilities of constitutional officers but rather updates the language to ensure clarity and inclusiveness. Given that this bill is contingent on a referendum, it also provides Maryland voters with the opportunity to weigh in on this important matter.

This bill represents progress, inclusivity, and the recognition that language should evolve alongside society. For these reasons, we request a favorable report on SB 773.