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SUSAN C. LEE
SECRETARY OF STATE

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Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Favorable

Senate Bill 733 – Constitutional Officers – Gender-Neutral Language

The Office of the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of State Susan Lee, are in strong support of SB733, which seeks to alter terminology in the Maryland Constitution to use gender-neutral language when referring to executive branch constitutional officers. This proposed Constitutional Amendment is past-due, but timely to bring up now in a sense because most of our constitutional officers are now women.

The current Lieutenant Governor Miller, Maryland Speaker of the House Jones, the Comptroller Lierman, the Adjutant General Birckhead, and I are all female Constitutional Officers. Five of the current nine Constitutional Officers are women, yet the Constitution refers to us all as “he”, “him”, “his”, and, “himself”. This bill only applies to the seven executive branch constitutional officers including the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, the Adjutant General, the Comptroller, and the Treasurer. But again, women make up the majority here as well, with women holding four out of seven of those positions.

The current gender-specific language in the Maryland Constitution can inadvertently maintain outdated notions of leadership and governance being inherently male. Adopting gender-neutral language will send a powerful message that leadership is inclusive and accessible to all, regardless of gender.

At least ten states have already adopted gender-neutral language in their constitution to recognize the importance of inclusivity in representation. It is time for Maryland to follow suit and acknowledge that its Constitution should reflect and encourage all who want to participate in public service. These amendments will foster a more inclusive representation of our political body as well as provide a more accurate depiction of our current and future leaders.

In conclusion, I urge a favorable report for SB733. This is a key step to ensure that our Constitution reflects the diversity and values of our great state. Of course, the legislation will be sent to the voters for ratification as a ballot question in 2026, and we believe this change will be considered significant as well as wildly popular amongst the public.