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Senate Bill 733 – Constitutional Officers – Gender–Neutral Language

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Mister Chairman and Members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

The Maryland Constitution cites seven Constitutional Officers. Those officers include:
The Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, Comptroller,
Treasurer and Adjutant General.

In 1982 the first woman was appointed to a Constitutional Officer position. In the 43 years since then, there has only been 14 months when there was not a female Constitutional Officer, and currently four of the seven Constitutional Officers are women.

Masculine pronouns have long been understood to encompass all people and its usage in the state constitution reflects the drafting convention at the time, but times have changed, and it is time for our constitution to reflect the roles of all people in our government. Senate Bill 733 will remove masculine pronouns as they relate to Constitutional Officers and replace those pronouns with the officer's title or gender neutral language. For example, Article II – Executive Department Section 1 currently reads: "*The executive power of the State shall be vested in a Governor, whose term of office shall commence on the third Wednesday of January next ensuing **HIS** election, and continue for four years until **HIS** successor shall have qualified...*" Under Senate Bill 733, that passage will read: "*The executive power of the State shall be vested in a Governor, whose term of office shall commence on the third Wednesday of January next ensuing **THE GOVERNOR'S** election, and continue for four years until **THE GOVERNOR'S** successor shall have qualified...*"

Senate Bill 733 will not change current meanings in our constitution, but it will affirm the rights and equality of all people. It is time to change the outdated use of masculine pronouns to define our Constitutional Officers and so I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 733.