

2025-02-27 SB 733 - Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Adam Spangler

Position: FAV

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OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

ANTHONY G. BROWN
Attorney General

February 27, 2025

TO: The Honorable Brian Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Adam Spangler
Legislative Aide, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

RE: Senate Bill 733 – Constitutional Officers – Gender–Neutral Language–
Support

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) urges the Committee to give Senate Bill 733 a favorable report. The proposed constitutional amendment aims to implement gender-neutral language concerning constitutional officers in the Maryland Constitution. This amendment represents an important step towards inclusivity and equality within our state's governing documents.

The language we use matters; it shapes our perception of roles and individuals within our society. By adopting gender-neutral terminology, we acknowledge and respect the diverse identities of all Marylanders. This is not the first time that Maryland has adopted gender neutral language. The Maryland Gender Neutral Reference in the Maryland Constitution Amendment, also known as Question 1, was on the November 2, 1982 ballot in Maryland as a legislatively referred constitutional amendment, where it was approved by nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of voters. The measure replaced gender specific reference in the Maryland Constitution with a gender neutral reference pertaining to imprisonment for debt.¹

Furthermore, this initiative aligns with similar efforts undertaken in various states, emphasizing the importance of language in legislative processes. Currently nine state

¹ Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, "Referenda Elections for Maryland 1968-1990,"

constitutions use gender neutral language.² By supporting **Senate Bill 733**, we can position Maryland as a leader in promoting gender equality and inclusiveness.

This amendment not only modernizes our Constitution but also ensures that it reflects the values of fairness and equality that we aspire to uphold as a society. For the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Attorney General urges the Committee to report **Senate Bill 733** favorably.

cc: The Honorable Senator Nancy J. King
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee Members

² *South Dakota Constitutional Amendment E, gender-neutral Constitutional Language Amendment (2024)*. Ballotpedia. (n.d.). [https://ballotpedia.org/South_Dakota_Constitutional_Amendment_E,_Gender-Neutral_Constitutional_Language_Amendment_\(2024\)#Gender-specific_language_in_state_constitutions](https://ballotpedia.org/South_Dakota_Constitutional_Amendment_E,_Gender-Neutral_Constitutional_Language_Amendment_(2024)#Gender-specific_language_in_state_constitutions)

SB733 Constitutional Officers – Gender-Neutral Lan

Uploaded by: Ariana Kelly

Position: FAV



Bill: Senate Bill 733:
Constitutional Officers – Gender-Neutral Language

Sponsor: Senator Nancy J. King
Hearing Date: February 27, 2025

Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Commission for Women strongly supports Senate Bill 733, which seeks to modernize the language of the Maryland Constitution by ensuring that references to our constitutional officers are gender-neutral. This simple yet significant change reflects the modern role of women and individuals of all gender identities in public service. By replacing outdated, masculine terminology with neutral language, Maryland takes an important step toward recognizing the contributions and leadership potential of all individuals, regardless of gender. This update is long overdue, not just to recognize the trailblazing women who have served in these roles, but also to inspire all the young people who may one day follow in their historic footsteps.

The Maryland Commission for Women recently published “*2025 Status of Women in Maryland: A Report on Maryland Women in Elected Office*.” According to this report:

- Maryland currently has its first female Comptroller
- Maryland currently has its second female and first woman of color Lieutenant Governor.
- Maryland is one of only 20 states that has never had a woman as Attorney General.
- Maryland is one of only 18 states that has never had a woman as Governor.

Maryland’s Secretary of State Susan Lee, while a trailblazer, is not the first woman in this role. That glass ceiling was shattered in 1949 by Vivian V. Simpson. According to her biography in the *Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame* (a project of the Maryland Commission for Women hosted by the state archives), while a student at University of Maryland, College Park:

Simpson found the rules on campus unfair to women - rules that prohibited smoking for female students, but not for males, requirements that women in dormitories turn off their lights at 9:30 p.m., while no such restrictions were placed on the men on campus.

She deliberately violated the lights-out rule and vigorously defended women suspended for violating the no-smoking rule.

However, her involvement with a group of female students who provided secret affidavits to a Washington Post reporter alleging sexual exploitation of the co-eds by the faculty (including seductions and "spanking parties") led to the University's refusal to readmit her the following semester. The resulting scandal brought the resignation of the University President, according to A History of the University of Maryland by Professor George Callcott, and the denial of an education to Ms. Simpson.

She sued the University of Maryland for readmission and won the case, but it was overturned on appeal, with the justices noting that this "was a young woman not readily submissive to rules and regulations." However, her experience introduced her to the field of law and no doubt led to her decision to become an attorney at a time when it was almost unheard of for women to pursue such a profession.

While times have certainly changed since Secretary Simpson and so many other trailblazing women have shattered glass ceilings, our state's Constitution has not kept up. It is a fitting tribute to their leadership in the face of significant obstacles to make the effort to update our Constitution. It would be a reflection of our gratitude, and a gesture of commitment to continue their legacy of expanding opportunity for all.

The Commission thanks Senator King for introducing this legislation and respectfully urges the committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 733 and move Maryland forward in its commitment to inclusivity and fairness for all individuals serving in public office. Our Executive Director Ariana Kelly is available to answer any further questions at Ariana.Kelly@Maryland.Gov

Maryland Commission for Women

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SB773-CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS- GENDER NEUTRAL LANG

Uploaded by: Asia Stanley

Position: FAV

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.

LOS_SB733 COM - Gender-Neutral Language.pdf

Uploaded by: Brooke Lierman

Position: FAV

Letter of Support

Senate Bill 733 / House Bill 1129 – Constitutional Officers – Gender-Neutral Language
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
February 27, 2025

Health & Government Operations Committee
March 7, 2025

Thank you, Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and honorable committee members. I come to you today as the 34th Comptroller of the State of Maryland and the first woman to hold this position.

In the state of Maryland, when an officer is not directly referenced with their title or position, they are referenced as “he, him, himself, or his.” Currently, of the seven constitutional officers in Maryland – the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, Comptroller, Treasurer, and Adjutant General – four of these roles are currently held by women.

It is time to update this outdated language in our Constitution – language that was written before women even had suffrage. Many other states have already adopted the use of gender-neutral pronouns when addressing an individual or office holder in their constitutions, such as California, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, New York, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Utah, and Vermont. Maryland must be the next.

I urge a favorable report on SB733/HB1129 and thank Senator Nancy King and Delegate Dana Jones for introducing this corrective legislation.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out me.

My best,



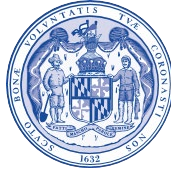
Brooke E. Lierman
Maryland Comptroller



Gender Neutral Language Bill EEE TAG final 2.27.25

Uploaded by: Janeen Birckhead

Position: FAV



WES MOORE
GOVERNOR
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

STATE OF MARYLAND
MILITARY DEPARTMENT
FIFTH REGIMENT ARMORY
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21201-2288

JANEEN L. BIRCKHEAD
MAJOR GENERAL
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

Constitutional Officers Gender Neutral Language

Good afternoon, Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 733, Constitutional Officers, Gender Neutral Language.

SB733 updates the Maryland Constitution to real world realities. Replacing masculine generics with gender-neutral language.

Four constitutional offices including the Lt. Governor, Comptroller, the Secretary of State, and the Adjutant General are currently held by strong, competent and capable women.

Whether it is to keep a record of all official acts and negotiating new relationships with international partners, to managing the fiscal affairs of the state, to commanding the six thousand members of the Maryland National Guard, Lt. Governor Miller, Comptroller Lierman, Secretary Lee and I are proof that it is time for this 20th century paradigm on the capacity of leadership to end.

In closing, nine states have amended their constitutions using gender-neutral language and others are considering similar updates. Maryland should lead the charge and truly “Leave No One Behind.”

For these reasons, I urge the committee to issue a favorable report for SB733. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Letter_Support_SB733_Womens_Caucus.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Kecia Munroe

Position: FAV

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Parliamentarian

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At Large

DEL. KYM TAYLOR, DISTRICT 23
At Large

WOMEN LEGISLATORS OF MARYLAND
THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

February 25, 2025

To: Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

The Maryland Women's Caucus is proud to express our unanimous support for SB733: Constitutional Officers – Gender-Neutral Language. This critical legislation seeks to modernize the Maryland Constitution by ensuring that references to constitutional officers use gender-neutral language, reflecting the principles of equality and inclusivity that our state upholds.

For far too long, language in legal and governmental documents has reflected outdated norms that fail to acknowledge the leadership and contributions of women and nonbinary individuals in public office. Words matter, and the language used in our governing documents should reflect the values of a modern and equitable democracy. By making these changes, SB733 ensures that all individuals—regardless of gender—see themselves represented in the highest offices of our state.

Throughout history, women in Maryland have fought tirelessly for equal rights, representation, and opportunities in leadership. While significant progress has been made, barriers to full inclusion remain, and symbolic yet meaningful steps—such as ensuring gender-neutral language in our Constitution—help reinforce that all qualified individuals have an equal place in governance. Representation in language fosters inclusivity, strengthens democracy, and reaffirms our commitment to gender equity.

By passing SB733, Maryland affirms its dedication to recognizing and respecting the leadership of all individuals who serve as constitutional officers. This legislation is not just a matter of semantics—it is a reflection of our state's progress and its ongoing efforts to promote fairness and equality in every aspect of government.

The Maryland Women's Caucus urges the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to issue a favorable report on SB733. Together, we can ensure that Maryland's Constitution reflects the values and principles of a truly representative and inclusive government.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to advancing gender equity in Maryland.

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Uploaded by: Michael Lore

Position: FAV

STATE OF MARYLAND

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

WES MOORE

GOVERNOR

ARUNA MILLER

LT. GOVERNOR



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SUSAN C. LEE
SECRETARY OF STATE

February 27th, 2025

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.

FreeState_Justice_SB0733_FAVORABLE.pdf

Uploaded by: Ronnie Taylor

Position: FAV



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www.freestate-justice.org

Education, Energy, and the Environment
Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Tuesday, February 25, 2025

SB0733 – Constitutional Officers – Gender–Neutral Language

Position: **FAVORABLE**

Chair Felman, Vice Chair Kagan and Esteemed Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

My name is Ronnie L. Taylor, and I serve as the Advocacy, Policy, & Partnerships Director at FreeState Justice, a nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing legal and systemic inequities affecting Maryland's LGBTQIA+ community. I am here to testify in strong support of **Senate Bill 733**, which seeks to amend the Maryland Constitution to use gender-neutral language when referring to constitutional officers.

SB0733 addresses the critical need for inclusive language in our state's foundational document. Currently, the Maryland Constitution employs gender-specific terms such as "he" when referring to constitutional officers, implicitly excluding individuals who do not identify as male. This language not only fails to represent the diversity of our state's populace but also perpetuates systemic biases against women and non-binary individuals.

The significance of this issue is underscored by the increasing representation of women in state leadership roles. As of February 2025, a record 13 women are serving as governors across the United States. However, many state constitutions, including Maryland's, continue to presume officeholders will be male, as highlighted by recent analyses. This discrepancy between our constitutional language and the reality of our leadership undermines the principles of equality and inclusiveness.

Senate Bill 587 proposes to amend the Maryland Constitution by replacing gender-specific terms with gender-neutral language when referring to constitutional officers. This change is not merely symbolic; it has tangible benefits:

LEADERSHIP TEAM

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Executive Director

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Advocacy, Policy, & Partnerships Director

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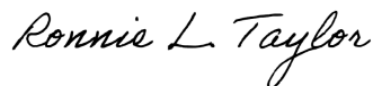
Andrew Ansel

1. **Promoting Inclusivity:** By adopting gender-neutral language, Maryland affirms its commitment to representing all citizens, regardless of gender identity. This aligns with broader efforts to ensure that legal documents and governmental practices are inclusive of all individuals.
2. **Reflecting Current Realities:** The amendment acknowledges and validates the presence and contributions of women and non-binary individuals in governmental roles, ensuring that our constitution accurately reflects the diversity of our leadership.
3. **Setting a Precedent:** Enacting this change positions Maryland as a leader in promoting gender equity, potentially inspiring other states to undertake similar reforms. This is particularly pertinent as discussions around gender-neutral language gain momentum nationwide

As a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, I have witnessed firsthand the impact of exclusionary language on individuals' sense of belonging and legitimacy. Language shapes our perceptions and experiences; when our state's constitution uses gender-specific terms, it sends a message—intentional or not—that leadership is inherently male. This can discourage women and non-binary individuals from aspiring to public office and perpetuates outdated gender norms.

In closing, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report for **Senate Bill 733**. This legislation is a necessary step toward ensuring that Maryland's Constitution embodies the values of equality and inclusiveness that we, as a state, strive to uphold. By adopting gender-neutral language, we affirm the dignity and worth of all individuals, fostering a more just and representative government.

Best,



Ronnie L. Taylor

Sources:

1. [As female representation hits new highs, constitutions still assume officials are male | AP News](#)
2. [More Than a Woman to Me: The Need for Gender Inclusive Language in Court Opinions and Statutes Relating to Abortion and Reproductive Health](#)
3. [The Gender Politics of Legal Language and Its Implications - NLIU Law Review](#)

SB733-King-Sponsor Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Senator Nancy King

Position: FAV

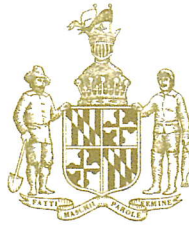
NANCY J. KING
Legislative District 39
Montgomery County

MAJORITY LEADER

Budget and Taxation Committee

Chair

Education, Business, and
Administration Subcommittee



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Senate Bill 733 – Constitutional Officers – Gender–Neutral Language

February 27, 2025

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.

Oppose SB733 .pdf

Uploaded by: Nancy Shih

Position: UNF

I strongly Oppose SB733 Altering terminology in the Maryland Constitution that refers to constitutional officers to be gender-neutral for the following reasons:

1. Preserving Historical and Legal Integrity The Maryland Constitution has existed for centuries with its original language. Changing terms to reflect modern preferences risks eroding the historical integrity of the document. Legal texts should maintain their original wording unless a change is necessary for clarity or legal function.

2. Unnecessary Government Overreach Government time and resources should be focused on more pressing issues such as crime, education, and economic growth rather than cosmetic language changes in legal documents.

3. Cost to Taxpayers

Implementing such changes will require taxpayer-funded efforts to update official documents, signage, and legal references, Taxpayer money should not be used for symbolic gestures that do not improve governance.

4. Political Ideology vs. Practicality – It's an effort driven by progressive ideology rather than a substantive legal need. It is part of a broader agenda to impose left-leaning social policies.

I urge you to vote Unfavorable against SB733 and its nonsense!

Nancy Shih

Howard County