

HB 10- Public Buildings- Changing Facilities
January 29, 2020
Health and Government Operations Committee Testimony

Position: Support

My name is Kim Tart. I live in District Heights, Maryland, Prince George's county. I have been a Maryland resident for 50 years. My son was diagnosed with Down Syndrome. He is a smart, playful, energetic 11-year-old. Recently, he had hip/femur surgery that requires him to use a wheel chair. My son wears adult pull-ups while recovering from his surgery. When we go shopping or travel to the movies or other public venues, there are no accommodations to allow us change his pull-up. He weighs too much for the changing table. An adult changing table is a convenient and safe way for me to assist him with his personal care needs.

During our trips, without any accessible restrooms enroute or in store/venue, we had one pull-up-changing location option - **in the back of the car in a parking lot**. I hate to imagine what caregivers of individuals with permanent physical disabilities such as cerebral palsy or spinal issues have to deal with. Options such as changing the diaper/pull-up in the van or on the floor of a gas station bathroom. Those options are both dehumanizing and unsanitary. And transitioning someone with cerebral palsy and spinal issues to a hard surface can injure them.

I ask that you support House Bill 10, Public Buildings - Changing Facilities for Adult Diapers (as amended by the Sponsor), which requires, except under certain circumstances, that a diaper-changing facility suitable for changing adults and children be installed in certain public restrooms in certain public buildings and requires the maintenance of a list containing locations of adult changing stations.

Adult changing tables — a rare amenity often only found in large hospitals — can support a few hundreds of pounds of weight, be adjusted for height and offer a necessity for adults with special needs. By not offering adult changing tables in public restrooms, people with physical disabilities are limited in their access to public spaces. Communities need to start pushing for legislation to require businesses and public spaces to include adult changing tables to create fully accessible spaces for all members of society. Those who have physical disabilities like cerebral palsy and seizure disorders that make them incontinent utilize these tables with the help of their parents or caregivers to take care of their toileting needs.

Buying and installing these tables can cost \$600-\$3,000. I know some may say the tables are too large to fit in some bathrooms; a poor excuse for their uncommonness in my opinion. For businesses to fully serve a diverse customer base, these changing tables provide an essential service to accommodate a portion of their clientele. Without these tables in family restrooms in different venues, people often resort to leaving or lying their loved ones on a public restroom floor.

Moving someone with a disability out of their wheelchair is a hurdle that adult changing tables can accommodate. Parents and caregivers often have to single-handedly execute this transition. Lifting a 120-pound person to a level, height-adjusted changing table designed to sustain an adult-sized body is easier and safer than moving them to the floor.

In 2010, the Americans with Disabilities Act was revised from its 1990 mandate to include grab bars, accessible faucet controls and larger toilet stalls, but failed to include any requirements for adult changing tables.

New York state Sen. Pamela Helming proposed \$1 million in a new state budget for full-service family restrooms with adult changing tables. Helming made the proposal after a mother whose son has Pallister-Killian mosaic syndrome, a rare disorder that causes extremely weak muscle tone, reached out because she felt society's push for inclusivity shouldn't be limited to the able-bodied. "Everyone needs accommodations, so why are we leaving out a specific group of people?" Aleong said. "We have to make sure everyone is included, even in the day-to-day actions of life."

Supporting new legislation for this implementation should truly be a no-brainer. If large airports have accessible places for pets to toilet, **then we should care enough** to add adult changing tables in public spaces **to accommodate the needs of all humans** too.

Sincerely,

Kim Tart

Proud Parent