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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Senate Bill 401

Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings - Single-Occupancy Public Restrooms - Availability (The Accessible to All Act)

Judicial Proceedings

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

February 12, 2020

SUPPORT

Background: Senate Bill 401 (SB401) would require that all signage for single-occupancy restrooms in public buildings and places of public accommodation, use gender inclusive symbols that do not use pictorial representations and contains only descriptive language, such as “restroom” or “bathroom.”

Written Comments: This simple change in the law makes single occupancy restrooms more inclusive and more accommodating for those with special needs. Caretakers can often feel excluded from being able to accompany those who they are assisting into a restroom, when this is one of the places they are needed most. This law has already been enacted in counties and municipalities in Maryland, as well as states across the country. This law does not require restrooms to be altered in any way, and simply lays out how signage must look so that everyone can feel comfortable when using a single-occupancy restroom.

The Baltimore Jewish Council represents The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore and all of its agencies, including Jewish Community Services (JCS), Comprehensive Housing Assistance Inc. (CHAI) and CHANA. All of these organizations provide services to Maryland’s rapidly growing aging populations. As we see this segment of the population grow, policies like this will only continue to be more necessary.

With this in mind, the Baltimore Jewish Council urges a favorable report of SB401.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.