



Senate Bill 401

Places of Public Accommodation and Public Building – Single-Occupancy Public Restrooms - Availability

Testimony in FAVOR

I write today in support of SB 401, a bill to make single accommodation restrooms in public buildings gender-neutral. This is something I have done in my restaurant (49 West in Annapolis). I want to tell you about our experience.

We made the decision to make our two (single-commode) restrooms gender neutral about five years ago. At that time, we simply removed the female and male signs from the door and waited to hear the public clamor.

It never came.

I think this is because people are used to going into a gender-neutral bathroom in their own homes. If you think about it, all of us grow up with bathrooms that don't have an assigned gender. Maybe you go in after your mom or dad or brother or sister. In any event, in our restaurant, nobody complained – we never had any pushback from customers.

It has many advantages. First, nobody has to wait. We had previously seen, particularly for women, lines forming while the men's room sat unoccupied. Second, if one of the toilets is clogged or the overflows and the restroom has to be shut down, you not inconveniencing one gender over the other.

Finally, I am in the business of making sure my customers are satisfied. Moving to non-gendered restrooms was just another way to ensure that they had a good experience in my establishment.

With regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian Cahalan', written in a cursive style.

Brian Cahalan

Owner

49 West Coffeehouse and Winebar
Annapolis, Maryland