

MARY L. WASHINGTON, PH.D
Legislative District 43
Baltimore City

Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs Committee

Chair
Joint Committee on Ending
Homelessness

Chair
Joint Committee on Children,
Youth, and Families



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 102
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3145 • 301-858-3145
800-492-7122 Ext. 3145
Mary.Washington@senate.state.md.us

SUPPORT – SB 765

Minority Business Enterprises – Sexual and Gender Minorities (Imari's Business Pride Act)

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

Testimony of Senator Mary Washington, March 4, 2021

Chair Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan and Members of the Committee,

SB765 alters the definition of "socially and economically disadvantaged individual" for purposes of certifying certain minority business enterprises to include certain sexual and gender minorities.

Currently Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and California, and a host of cities (14) already have recognized certified LGBT Business Certified Enterprises (LGBTBES) with the following states in the process to recognize LGBTBES: Oregon, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Connecticut, and Illinois.

In November of 2019, Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) approved policy to include The National LGBT Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC) Certified LGBT Business Enterprises® (Certified LGBTBES®) in contracting and procurement opportunities. In 2018 our very own Baltimore City, through Executive Order 2018-02, recognized LGBTQ-Owned business entities, those with 51% or more ownership by LGBTQ+ individuals.

With more diverse providers, Maryland can achieve statewide goals and save taxpayer's dollars by creating greater competition while driving down bid prices. LGBT business owners add \$1.7 Trillion to the US economy.

I want to take this opportunity to thank my constituent, Terrance Thrweatt, who submitted this bill request in honor of this brother, Imari, who passed away. Imari designed and sold gender-affirming apparel for transmen from his family's clothing store in Downtown Baltimore.

I ask you for a favorable report on SB765.

In partnership,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mary Washington". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a stylized "W".

Senator Mary Washington, District 43, Baltimore City