

State of Maryland

Commission on Civil Rights

“Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination.”



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March 2, 2021

House Bill 1203 – Certificates of Birth and Marriage Certificates - Issuance of New Certificates - Sex Designation POSITION: Support

Dear Chairperson Pendergrass, Vice Chairperson Peña-Melnyk, and Members of the House Health & Government Operations Committee:

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (“MCCR”; “The Commission”) is the State agency responsible for the enforcement of laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and state contracts based upon race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, physical and mental disability, and source of income.

House Bill 1203 requires the Maryland Department of Health to follow new protocols when issuing a new or amended birth certificate to reflect a change of information or sex on the birth certificate. Similar protocols are established for Clerks who issue new or amended marriage licenses when at least one spouse has undergone a sex transition, or has an intersex condition.

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights supports HB1203 because the bill establishes a framework by which a parent, guardian, child, and/or spouse can amend birth and marriage certificates to reflect their correct gender identity and name change, where applicable and with the support of licensed health care practitioners. These changes will make great strides in preventing unintentional disclosure of transgender identity or sex assigned at birth in situations requiring personal identification such as seeking employment, housing, or service at public places requiring age or gender verification for entry or access. Both marital status and gender identity are protected classes under MCCR’s statute. As such, our agency supports the additional protections this law would provide.

For these reasons, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights urges a favorable vote on HB1203. Thank you for your time and consideration of the information contained in this letter. The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights looks forward to the continued opportunity to work with you to improve and promote civil rights in Maryland.