



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

March 2, 2021

House Bill 1203

Certificates of Birth and Marriage Certificates - Issuance of New Certificates - Sex Designation

House Health and Government Operations Committee

Position: OPPOSE

The Maryland Catholic Conference represents the public-policy interests of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, the Archdioceses of Baltimore and Washington and the Diocese of Wilmington, which together encompass over one million Marylanders.

House Bill 1203 would allow parents of minor children to petition to change their child's birth certificate after that parent had undergone a gender transition. The parent could be listed as mother, father, non-binary, other, or unspecified. No prior legal name or sex designation of the parent could be listed, and the document would have to appear original, unchanged and with no markings designating it as "amended."

The Conference has serious concerns about erasing the history of previous, legal documents of vital statistics. This body has heard compelling testimony from adoptees asking to be guaranteed their right to documents about their identity and origins, sharing their desire to know their parentage, heritage, genetic data, and accurate medical history. Legal birth certificates provide a starting point for individuals to their genetic data, which helps with early detection and prevention of thousands of inherited diseases. This knowledge requires knowing the mitochondrial DNA inherited from one's mother, the SRY gene from one's father, and the nuclear DNA from both parents.

Eliminating the original birth record creates a new class of children denied access to their vital records. Erasing these vital statistics could also skew future studies based on vital statistics which utilize the sex-based physiological differences of individuals to determine public health factors.

It is for these reasons that the Maryland Catholic Conference respectfully urges an unfavorable report for **HB1203**. Thank you for your consideration.