



SB0061 Public Buildings – Changing Facilities – Requirements

Presented to Hon. Will Smith and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

January 28, 2021 11:00 a.m.

POSITION: SUPPORT

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee **a favorable report on SB0061 - Public Buildings – Changing Facilities – Requirements**, sponsored by Senator Clarence Lam.

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice. As part of our efforts to protect reproductive freedom for all Marylanders, we work to ensure every childbearing individual has the right to decide if, when, and how many children to have, and to parent in good health, in safety, and with dignity. In doing so, we support measures that ensure public spaces are accessible so caregivers can provide care with dignity.

Being unable to locate an accessible, safe space to change a diaper can delay diaper changes and cause stress for both diaper-wearer and caregiver. There are adverse health effects associated with the inability to change a diaper as needed. Rashes can develop which may turn into open sores, infections including yeast and urinary tract, and other illnesses if their diapers are not changed regularly.

Finding a corner to change a young child's diaper is possible, even if often unsafe and unsanitary. A person providing care to a teen or adult needing similar care cannot just go into a corner, however. The 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design include many design features, like grab bars and bathroom stalls large enough to fit wheelchairs, and even include provisions to ensure baby changing stations are accessible to all and do not block other accessibility features. But they lack provisions for adult changing facilities.¹ The State of Maryland has the opportunity to go above and beyond the ADA standards and create more accessible public spaces.

Ensuring that public spaces have access to not just changing facilities for young children, but for all people who need this space is a matter of equity and dignity for all. Ensuring changing facilities can be located through 2-1-1 allows caregivers to plan and prepare without delaying diaper changes and personal care needs. And we know that women overwhelmingly serve as the primary caregivers of not only infants, but of other family members in need of hands-on care for short-or long-term disabilities.

The ability to parent and care with dignity is essential to the realization of reproductive freedom, and contributes to realizing plans to add to one's existing family. For these reasons, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges a favorable committee report on SB0061**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

¹ Department of Justice (2010, September 15). 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design. *Department of Justice*.
<https://www.ada.gov/regs2010/2010ADAStandards/2010ADAStandards.pdf>