

HB0039

Action for Change of Name - Waiver of Publication Requirement

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Shetty

House Judiciary Committee

January 15, 2021

Position: Support

Mr. Chairperson, members of the House Judiciary Committee

Annapolis Pride urges strong support for HB0039.

Under current Maryland law, when someone files to change their legal name in Maryland, they are required to publish a notice of their name change in a local newspaper, unless they file a motion for the publication requirement to be waived and the motion is granted by a judge.

This bill will reduce the barriers transgender people and others face in living their lives authentically as themselves, and reduce potential discrimination by protecting their privacy.

Publication of a name change can be a significant violation of the person's privacy and add weeks or months to the process and cost up to an additional \$250. The publication can linger on the Internet indefinitely and result in discrimination or even violence in the case of transgender people and survivors of stalking or domestic violence.

The process of persuading a court to grant a motion to waive the publication requirement also requires additional time and legal costs, and in many areas of the state, still might not be granted. A judge may deny any and all such motions and require publication anyway.

HB 39, however, will require courts to waive the publication requirement whenever such a motion is filed, thereby protecting the privacy of those changing their names and making the process faster and more affordable.

This is a simple bill and will cost the State of Maryland nothing. The only change will be to require all motions for waiver of the publication requirement to be granted. If anything, this bill will only serve to reduce the burden on our courts. All existing notification laws will remain unchanged.

People in our communities deserve the liberty to decide when and to whom they wish to disclose their name change and should be free to live their lives without fear. Please support the safety, dignity, and privacy of all Marylanders.

We respectfully urge this committee to issue a **favorable report for House Bill 39.**

Annapolis Pride is a non-profit organization that celebrates the LGBTQ+ community, engaging local residents, businesses and groups to unite in welcoming and embracing diversity in Annapolis. Learn more:

annapolispride.org

Respectfully submitted by:

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