



TESTIMONY FOR HB0453

Correctional Facilities - Transgender, Nonbinary, and Intersex Inmates (Transgender Respect, Agency, and Dignity Act)

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Lopez

Committee: Judiciary

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0453 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of individuals and grassroots groups with members in every district in the state with well over 30,000 members.

There are so many people in our jails, many of them for relatively minor crimes, that we have to re-think the whole process of incarceration. For persons who identify as transgender, or non-binary, or inter-sex, as well as for persons who identify with a religion that is non-Christian, or do not speak English very well, and many other personal traits that set them apart from the general population, any time in a correctional facility, no matter how short, can be very fraught.

This bill will allow for an inmate to state their personal orientation privately, in non-threatening circumstances. It will also allow them to be housed in a manner that respects their personal orientation and prohibit discriminatory treatment in the programs, services or activities they are entitled to.

We can no longer think of prisons as places for criminals who are beyond redemption. They are places that too many of our youth spend time in, and can have their lives shattered even more by the treatment they receive from correctional officers. New standards must be set to mitigate these problems.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.