



LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

Bill: **HB 0370 Certificates of Birth- Issuance of New Certificates- Sex Designation**

Organization: PFLAG Salisbury Inc., PO Box 5107, Salisbury Maryland 21802

Submitted by: Michele Copper, Board Member

Position: **FAVORABLE**

SALISBURY PFLAG SUPPORTS HB 0370 Certificates of Birth- Issuance of New Certificates

I am submitting this testimony in FAVOR of HB 0370 on behalf of PFLAG Salisbury, the Salisbury, Maryland Chapter of PFLAG National.

The Certificates of Birth- Issuance of New Certificates bill would create procedures for modification of birth certificates in the event of a gender or name change. Further, the bill would allow for replacement of gendered language on birth certificates (e.g., “mother” and “father”) with gender neutral language (“parent”).

Birth certificates are one of the most common documents used to verify a person’s identity. Thus, it is important that they be free of errors or inconsistencies. Errors on birth certificates can create additional complications for transgender, nonbinary, and intersex people, leading to heightened scrutiny of documentation and creating barriers to services for which these documents provide access. This bill would allow transgender, nonbinary, and intersex people the ability to correct inaccuracies on this vital document.

Many people who are transgender, nonbinary, or intersex seek name and gender marker changes as part of the process of their gender transition. Research finds that changing one’s name is not only affirming, but can also improve people’s access to medical and mental health care and reducing people’s exposure to the stress of being misgendered. In short, legal name changes improve the health, well-being, and safety of transgender, nonbinary, and intersex people.

In addition, legal name changes are in the best interest of the State of Maryland, helping to ensure that state records are accurate and up-to-date. Thus, adoption of procedures for name changes and removal

of gendered language on state-issued birth certificates is in keeping with the best interests of both transgender, nonbinary, and intersex Marylanders and the State of Maryland.

It is for these reasons that Salisbury PFLAG supports HB 0370 and recommends a FAVORABLE report in committee.