



LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

Bill: **HB 0572/SB 0486 Gender Inclusive Signage for Single Occupancy Restrooms**

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

Submitted by: Nicole Hollywood, President of the Board

Position: **FAVORABLE**

SALISBURY PFLAG SUPPORTS GENDER INCLUSIVE SINGLE OCCUPANCY BATHROOMS

I am submitting this testimony in FAVOR of HB 0572/SB 0486 on behalf of PFLAG Salisbury, the Salisbury, Maryland Chapter of PFLAG National.

In order to be more welcoming and inclusive of all residents, in 2020 Salisbury, Maryland passed a resolution to make all single use bathrooms have gender neutral signage and now the State has the opportunity to do the same with HB 0572/SB 0486.

Gender neutral bathroom ordinances occur when a city, state, or municipality stipulates that all public single occupancy bathrooms be designated as non-gendered. The benefits of such ordinances is multi-faceted having a positive impact on multiple individuals and groups. First, gender inclusive bathrooms provide transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people access to a restroom without needing to be "gender policed." All too often, gender non-conforming individuals face serious safety and harassment risks using public restrooms and gender-neutral bathroom options allow everyone to feel safer in public spaces.

Next, gender-inclusive bathrooms benefit gender-conforming people as well as they are helpful to families with children as well as to adults that require assistance from opposite sex parents or caregivers when using bathroom facilities. Further, single use bathrooms are crucial to the paruresis and parcopresis communities, with paruresis also known as "shy bladder syndrome" and parcopresis commonly referred to as "shy bowel syndrome." Pauresis and parcopresis are conditions in which a person is unable to use a restroom comfortably in the presence of others.

Finally, gender-inclusive bathrooms help to alleviate the long waits commonly associated with female restrooms, better known as potty parity. Also, they give businesses more options when facilities are out of order as well as save building space and energy usage.

As a result of the numerous benefits of ordinances that designate that single occupancy bathrooms be gender inclusive, these initiatives are both favorable for businesses and endorsed by the American Restroom Association. Therefore, PFLAG Salisbury Inc. supports this legislation and recommends a FAVORABLE report in committee.