



TESTIMONY TO THE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE

SB 486 - Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings - Gender-Inclusive Signage

POSITION: Support

BY: Nancy Soreng - LWVMD President

DATE: February 15, 2022

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization that works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. The League believes in social justice and the health and safety of all Americans, including intersex, transgender and gender non-conforming Marylanders, who currently face discrimination when simply attempting to use a restroom in public.

People who identify outside of the gender binary - such as nonbinary, gender non-conforming, gender expansive, and intersex persons who do not have a binary gender presentation - face danger when using sex-segregated bathrooms. According to a study done by the National Center for Transgender Equality, more than 60% of transgender individuals avoid the use of public bathrooms out of fear of harassment and ridicule.

Being perceived as entering the “wrong” restroom is dangerous, increasing the likelihood of violence, and creating stress disproportionately incurred by Maryland’s trans communities. The transgender community deserves the same rights and safety as anyone else.

By mandating that public spaces and places of public accommodations remove gendered signs, SB 486 will build a more inclusive and affirming community for intersex, transgender and gender non-conforming Marylanders. This bill makes a significant and important contribution to making our public spaces truly accessible, safe, and validating for all of Maryland’s citizens.

The LWVMD, representing 1500+ concerned citizens throughout Maryland, strongly urges a favorable report.