

LeadingAge Maryland - 2022 - SB 486 - public rest

Uploaded by: Aaron Greenfield

Position: FAV



6811 Campfield Road
Baltimore, MD 21207

TO: Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: LeadingAge Maryland
SUBJECT: Senate Bill 486, Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings - Single-Occupancy Public Restrooms - Availability (The Accessible to All Act)
DATE: February 15, 2022
POSITION: **Favorable**

LeadingAge Maryland supports Senate Bill 486, Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings - Single-Occupancy Public Restrooms - Availability (The Accessible to All Act).

LeadingAge Maryland is a community of more than 135 not-for-profit aging services organizations serving residents and clients through continuing care retirement communities, affordable senior housing, assisted living, nursing homes and home and community-based services. Our mission is to expand the world of possibilities for aging in Maryland. We partner with consumers, caregivers, researchers, public agencies, faith communities and others who care about aging in Maryland.

Senate Bill 486 requires public restrooms to include gender-inclusive signs. Other states have passed similar laws. The benefit reaches beyond what some may consider controversial issues. Such a law would be impactful for frail older adults who need toileting assistance and may have caretakers of the opposite gender, such as spouses. Passage of Senate Bill 486 would provide seniors with the dignity they deserve.

For these reasons, LeadingAge Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report for Senate Bill 486.

**For more information, please contact Aaron J. Greenfield, Greenfield Law, LLC,
410.446.1992**

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Uploaded by: Allan Richardson

Position: FAV

HB 572 Testimony – Open to All Act
February 16, 2022

House Economic Matters Committee

Good afternoon Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and members of the Committee.

My name is Allan Richardson and I am here today in support of HB 572, The Open to All Act.

I have resided in Maryland for over 70 years, and during that time my wife, Sally, and I greatly enjoyed going out to dinner and attending both folk and classical music performances in venues throughout Maryland. Unfortunately, in recent years Sally battled both dementia and severe loss of mobility. In spite of this, she continued to find great comfort in these outings. They gave us the chance to retain an important part of our former life.

But there were problems. At first, it was difficult for Sally, who had become easily confused, to manage trips to the ladies room alone. I became uncomfortable allowing her to enter restrooms by herself because she would forget where she was. Then later, when she became wheelchair bound, she was completely unable to manage without assistance. Although there were sometimes restrooms accessible to those with disabilities, she could not use these alone. And more often I had to decide whether to bring Sally into the men's restroom or to hire our daytime female caretaker for the evening to assist her. This added a layer of stress (and expense) to our evening that my wife and I did not need.

These are not easy things to discuss in public. But The Open to All Act would alleviate many of these problems by providing free access to all for single use bathrooms. That would help us to manage by ourselves many of the problems we experienced. We all want to be out enjoying events in Maryland and it goes without saying that none of us want to worry about how to access a restroom, regardless of our sex or state of disability.

In conclusion, I thank you for taking the time to consider this bill and ask for a favorable report.

Blake Gender Inclusive Signage Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Blake Mihm

Position: FAV

SB 486 Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings - Gender-Inclusive Signage
February 15, 2022

Position: Support

My name is Blake Mihm, and I am writing to support bill 486, Open to All Act. I work for the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services in public health.

My job brings me all over the county as I serve my community. I am frequently in county buildings, and do not have a restroom to use. It is an awful feeling to know that I cannot access a bathroom during my workday without feeling fear of harassment. It is unfortunate that even in county buildings, there are no restrooms for gender expansive individuals despite the presence of single-stall restrooms. A simple change of signage would open these restrooms to everyone who needs them. Making these restrooms inclusive to everyone is an easy change that will have a real beneficial impact on people like me everyday.

Thank you,
Blake Mihm

SB0486 2022-02-11 Testimony of FreeState Justice t

Uploaded by: C.P. Hoffman

Position: FAV



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February 15, 2022

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Testimony of FreeState Justice

IN SUPPORT OF

SB0486: Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings - Gender-Inclusive Signage

To the Honorable Chair William C. Smith, Jr., Vice Chair Jeff Waldstreicher, and esteemed members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

FreeState Justice is Maryland's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) civil rights advocacy organization. Each year, we provide free legal services to dozens, if not hundreds, of LGBTQ+ Marylanders who could not otherwise be able to afford an attorney, as well as advocate more broadly on behalf of the LGBTQ+ community.

We write today in support of Senate Bill 486, which would require single-occupancy restrooms across the state to be designated with gender-neutral signage. This bill will not only benefit nonbinary, transgender, and gender-nonconforming Marylanders, for whom using the restroom can be a particularly stressful experience, it also benefits individuals with disabilities and their caretakers, parents of young children, and anyone who has ever waited in a long line for a gendered restroom while the other sits empty and unused.

Since 2019, Baltimore City has had a similar ordinance, which has required single-occupancy restrooms to be labelled with gender-neutral signage. After more than two years of implementation, there

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FreeState Justice, Inc. (formerly FreeState Legal Project, Inc., merging with Equality Maryland) is a social justice organization that works through direct legal services, legislative and policy advocacy, and community engagement to enable Marylanders across the spectrum of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer identities to be free to live authentically, with safety and dignity, in all communities throughout our state.

have been no unforeseen consequences, no rush of frivolous lawsuits against places of public accommodation, and no wave of sex-related crimes. The sky has not fallen in Baltimore as a result of Ordinance #19-265, nor has it fallen in the multiple other jurisdictions that have implemented similar laws, including the District of Columbia, New York City, or Philadelphia, all of which have been in place since 2016. Indeed, DC's Municipal Rule 4-802 has been in place since 2006, without issue.

FreeState Justice strongly believes that based on the experience in Baltimore City and beyond, requiring single-occupancy restrooms in places of public accommodation to be marked with gender-neutral signage will not have any unforeseen negative repercussions. Instead, it will improve the lives of many Marylanders who are limited by the current gendered nature of many single-occupancy facilities. This includes not only LGBTQ+ Marylanders, but also individuals with disabilities who may simply want to use the nearest restroom, parents and other caretakers who may not be the same gender as the individuals they are caring for, and women across the state, who often find themselves waiting in extraordinarily long lines while the designated "Men's" restroom sits vacant.

For these reasons, FreeState Justice urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 486.

Testimony in Support of SB 0486.pdf

Uploaded by: Chloe Kastner

Position: FAV

Testimony in Support of SB 0486

Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings – Gender Inclusive Signage

Judicial Proceedings Committee

02/14/2022

Chloe Kastner

Abingdon, Maryland/District 34B

Chair William C. Smith Jr. and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 0486.

I believe that SB0486 is important because of the impact it will have to transgender and non-binary Marylanders. I know many members of the transgender and non-binary community who experience anxiety around using the bathroom in public, some of whom have stated that they have experienced significant discomfort because they have specifically avoided using public restrooms depending on how they feel they are presenting on a given day. When discussing this bill with several close friends one individual shared with me that they would plan their day around what places offered gender neutral bathrooms because they were afraid. Specifically, in the town of Bel Air the only establishment where they could comfortably use the restroom was at Starbucks because they had non-gendered bathrooms. This bill would allow individuals to comfortably use the single stall bathrooms without concern for their safety and well-being. Additionally, I can personally speak to having waited in line for a single stall women's room at a restaurant when the men's room is empty and there was no need for restrictions on the bathrooms. This bill would also alleviate that problem for the general public.

Please do what you can to support all Marylanders. I strongly urge you to support SB0486.

Thank you for your consideration,

Chloe Kastner

Abingdon, MD 21009

SB0486 Rigby Favorable.pdf

Uploaded by: Christiana Rigby

Position: FAV



Howard County Council

George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043-4392

Christiana Rigby
Councilmember

District 3

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB0486

Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings - Gender-Inclusive Signage Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

February 15, 2022

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to the Committee. I am writing to express my **strong support for SB0486**, legislation introduced by Senators Kagan, Waldstreicher, and Washington to promote access to gender-inclusive bathrooms to all Marylanders.

The purpose of this legislation is to make single-user public restrooms in Maryland available to all individuals regardless of gender, and to require that the signage for these single-user bathrooms is gender-inclusive. This legislation makes a simple, but important change to public restrooms in our state, ensuring that using the restroom is a safe and comfortable experience for all members of our community. It is a low-cost, common-sense measure that makes a world of difference to so many people.

This legislation is for all of us. It's for families with young children, like my own, who are often in need of a single-user restroom and are limited by availability. This legislation is also for transgender and nonbinary community members who often feel unwelcome in public restrooms and places that are exclusionary. This legislation also benefits caretakers and people with disabilities who would benefit from greater access to single-user bathrooms.

In April 2021, the Howard County Council unanimously passed local legislation ([CB20-2021](#)) to implement this important change in Howard County. This issue received broad and bipartisan support because Howard County recognized that this legislation is simply about ensuring that public places and accommodations serve all members of the public.

Thank you for your consideration of this legislation. I respectfully encourage a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christiana Rigby".

Christiana Rigby
Howard County Councilmember, District 3

MD Senate Testimony - Zakreski.pdf

Uploaded by: Ed Zakreski

Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY OF ED ZAKRESKI, MANAGING DIRECTOR
IN SUPPORT OF SB 486/HB 572 "OPEN TO ALL ACT"**

In 2019, Round House reopened our renovated theatre. When we designed the signage for the renovation, we made the values-based decision to label our single-occupancy restroom as a Family Restroom, with a further explanation that our restrooms are available to everyone, regardless of their gender expression or identity.

Since that time, we have had multiple patrons express their gratitude for this signage and availability and have not had a single complaint.

Just about every business covered by this bill is in a business dependent on customers. That means that our revenues – our success – is dependent on creating an environment that is welcoming, safe, and accepting for our patrons. The more people we make happy, the better it is for our bottom line.

And there are so many people who hesitate when facing gendered signage on single stall restrooms: parents with young children, people who identify as trans or non-binary, caregivers of a different gender than the person they're caring for. This is about the easiest, least expensive action that can be taken to provide a more welcoming environment to a large number of people. It's not just the right thing to do ethically, it's simply good business. All for the cost of a couple signs.

Moreover, as the father of a transgender son – whose statement is included below – I can personally attest to the anxiety, and sometimes fear, that many trans people encounter when forced to use gendered restrooms. There are websites to help trans people navigate their personal safety when travelling to different states and identifying business that are safe locations. Passing this bill will provide much reassurance to a community that faces significant discrimination and marginalization.

I strongly encourage you to vote in support of the Open To All Act.

Statement from my son, Cameron Zakreski:

"Since coming out as trans in 2019, the first time I have truly felt safe walking into a men's room without the protection of my father or brother was when I saw a sign which actively welcomed me to use the correct bathroom for me. Because not only did I know I was allowed in that restroom, but everyone else had also seen the sign saying I was allowed in this bathroom. There's a sense of security that comes with being reassured that you'll be safe and protected if anything happens. I still avoid public restrooms, when possible, but in venues where there's a sign welcoming trans individuals to please use the bathroom they want, that fear of public restrooms goes away because I know that someone there has my back if something happens. That's why inclusive signage is important. I shouldn't have to fear using the restroom and neither should anyone else."

Support for Open to All Act - Graham, Elizabeth K

Uploaded by: Elizabeth Graham

Position: FAV

Support SB486
Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 15, 2022
Testimony of Elizabeth K. Graham

Testimony in favor of SB 486 Open to All Act

My name is Elizabeth Graham. I am a transgender and autistic woman and I have been a Maryland resident for a good majority of my life. I am giving this testimony in favor of SB0486 the Open to All Act. I am a volunteer co-facilitator of Maryland Trans Unity transgender support group and I work full-time as a Service Coordinator for the Maryland Waiver for Children with Autism. I am helping to represent the transgender and developmental disability communities.

Public bathrooms are often a daily challenge to navigate for people in both communities; many transgender and gender expansive people can and do face danger in these public shared facilities. Children and adults with disabilities might need support in public bathrooms from a support person of a different gender. In my field of autism, many autistic people find the shared public bathrooms overwhelming with different sensory input such as sound and smells; single-occupancy bathrooms help with this sensory overload. It is not uncommon for gender expansive and autistic people to develop health problems as a result of avoiding public bathrooms due to fear.

In the beginning of my gender transition, single-occupancy bathrooms were where I changed clothes to present in a manner consistent with my gender identity. As a child, these bathrooms were a refuge from the loud environment of shared public bathrooms. There were times I would go in a single-occupancy bathroom regardless of the signage, because when you have to go you have to go.

Maryland has passed legislation to protect from discrimination on the basis of gender identity in public accommodations and now offers an X gender marker on state-issued identification. To help complement these past legislative actions, gender-neutral signage on single-occupancy bathrooms is important to ensure equitable access to the transgender and gender-expansive community.

Recently Governor Hogan, in the proposed fiscal year 2023 budget, added \$2.8 million in funding for the Autism Waiver so an additional 100 children can receive home and community based services; he has done similarly in the past. This means that folks with disabilities will be out in the community and need to have equitable access to bathroom facilities.

In other places, having the practical gender-neutral signage for single-occupancy bathrooms is also observed. Please consider the times we may fly on airplanes, travel on trains, and utilize port-a-potties with urinals; often the signage for the bathroom is gender neutral, labeled often as just bathroom or lavatory. It's very practical and everyone seems to be fine with utilizing the same single-occupancy bathroom.

I ask that you pass this bill. It is a crucial legislation that helps to further ensure safe and equitable access to all Marylanders.

Elizabeth K. Graham
Silver Spring, MD 20906
LIZZYG0816@GMAIL.COM

SB486_GenderInclusiveBathroom_KennedyKrieger_Suppo

Uploaded by: Emily Arneson

Position: FAV



DATE: February 15, 2022 **COMMITTEE:** Senate Judicial Proceedings
BILL NO: Senate Bill 486
BILL TITLE: Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings - Gender-Inclusive Signage
POSITION: Support

Kennedy Krieger Institute supports Senate Bill 486 - Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings - Gender-Inclusive Signage

Bill Summary:

Senate Bill 486 requires single-occupancy public restrooms be marked with gender-inclusive signage that does not indicate a specific gender.

Background:

Kennedy Krieger Institute provides specialized services to patients nationally and internationally. Kennedy Krieger Institute is dedicated to improving the lives of children and young adults with developmental, behavioral, cognitive and physical challenges. Kennedy Krieger's services include inpatient, outpatient, school-based and community-based programs.

The Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities (MCDD) at Kennedy Krieger Institute is proud to be Maryland's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (UCEDD) and a member of the national Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD).

MCDD links the community to vital services, research and information to improve the lives of people with disabilities. Our mission is to provide leadership that advances the inclusion of people with intellectual, developmental and other disabilities through preservice preparation and training; research and evaluation; community service and technical assistance; and information dissemination.

Rationale:

Approximately 20% of the US population is living with a disability. As a provider for individuals with disabilities, Kennedy Krieger feels strongly that all people deserve privacy and safety when using a public restroom. Gender inclusive bathrooms in public spaces are important for the patients, students, and families whom we serve at Kennedy Krieger Institute.

A single-occupancy public restroom is defined as fully enclosed, containing only one toilet, and may be locked by the user. Often, the user of the public restroom is an individual, child or adult, with one or more disability who requires caregiver(s), and/or Direct Service Provider(s) (DSP) to assist them with their toileting needs and to assure privacy by being able to lock the restroom door on behalf of the individual whom they are serving. In many instances, the caregiver or DSP is not the same gender as the person whom they are serving.

Additionally, gender-inclusive signage will create both a pictorial representation and descriptive language (such as "restroom", "bathroom", or "toilet"), which will be helpful to many individuals with disabilities.

Kennedy Krieger Institute requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 486.

2_15 SB 486 Places of Public Accommodation and Pub

Uploaded by: Ericka McDonald

Position: FAV



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.

SB 486 testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Isabella Shycoff

Position: FAV



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(he/him)

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(she/her)

Eric Lund
(he/him)

Jazzmyn Proctor
(she/they)

Isabella Shycoff
(she/her)

February 14, 2022

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

Position: Support

We, the board of directors of Annapolis Pride, support SB 486. This bill updates the law by requiring places of public accommodation and state buildings that have single occupancy public restrooms must be marked with gender-inclusive signage.

Gender-inclusive signage allows less wait times for restrooms. It also allows parents to accompany their children and caregivers to easily assist people for whom they are responsible for in the restroom, regardless of gender.

California, Vermont and Illinois, along with cities like Washington, D.C., Baltimore City, Philadelphia, Austin and New York City, have passed laws that require gender-neutral single occupancy restrooms be more inclusive and we believe Maryland should pass this legislation as well.

We strongly urge a favorable report on SB 486.

Mayor Day SB 486 FAV Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Jacob Day

Position: FAV



City of Salisbury

Jacob R. Day, Mayor

15 February 2022

Committees: Judicial Proceedings & Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Testimony on: SB 486 – Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings - Gender-Inclusive Signage

Position: Favorable

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings and Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committees,

As you consider the merits of **SB 486**, I ask that you **support** this vital legislation and vote to give **SB 486** a **Favorable** Committee report.

The City of Salisbury supports SB 486, which will more fully embrace our shared commitment to inclusivity by ensuring that single-occupancy public restrooms throughout Maryland are accessible to all. This bill is essential as it demonstrates our commitment to become a more welcoming state that Marylanders can be proud to call "home."

Here in Salisbury, we proudly proclaim that "all are welcome here." As Mayor, I recognize that this is not just a tagline but a clarion call to action, ensuring that all are indeed welcome here, in our city. In 2020, when Salisbury adopted our gender-inclusive restroom ordinance, our efforts were lauded by members of the public, and the move was also widely accepted by members of our business community.

By rising above the superficial divides of gender and taking an active approach to embracing inclusivity, Salisbury joined the ranks of a handful of other jurisdictions across Maryland that have already adopted gender-neutral bathroom laws. Just as I take pride in proclaiming that all are welcome in our city, it is my most sincere hope that we will soon realize our shared goal of ensuring that all feel welcome throughout Maryland as we adopt gender-inclusive restrooms statewide and take small yet meaningful steps that will yield an immeasurable impact for years to come.

Following the decisive and unifying action we took to adopt a gender-inclusive bathroom ordinance, we have sent a message to parents, many of whom are now more comfortable accompanying their young children to the restroom. Our actions sent a message to our LGBTQ+ community, not only stating – but demonstrating – *you are welcome here*. We helped caregivers feel more comfortable as they tend to the needs of those entrusted to their care. Far too often, we allow the superficial fault lines of gender identity to separate and stigmatize. Actively embracing gender-neutral, inclusive facilities, we are sending a message that now is the time for progress, to stipulate and codify that places of public accommodation must indeed accommodate all.

This legislation, if enacted, would foster a culture of inclusivity by ensuring that we are not unnecessarily divided by gender in single-occupancy restrooms. I ask for your **support** of this impactful legislation.

Respectfully,

Jacob R. Day
Mayor

Olney Theatre Center Testimony for Open to All Act

Uploaded by: Jenna Place

Position: FAV



Olney Theatre Center Testimony for Open to All Act – HB 572/SB 486

Olney Theatre Center enthusiastically supports the Open to All Act – HB 572/SB 486. I'm writing to share my perspective from one of Maryland's state theaters about the positive effects we saw in shifting our bathroom signage in 2018 and why this bill will keep Maryland business moving forward in all aspects from hiring staff to attracting tourists.

Arts organizations have always had to wrestle with the financial challenges of providing access and lowering barriers to our work while functioning within a capitalist system, but shifting the branding of our restrooms was not one of these challenges. This change was inexpensive. It didn't require labor of our staff (in fact it made them more efficient and more comfortable, which I expand upon below). This means that the benefits *far* outweigh the effort to make this change.

To begin with, this shift benefited the patrons our theater was already serving. We program work that encourages intergenerational attendance and because of our relationships with retirement communities like Leisure World we also serve many elderly audience members. The simple act of changing our restroom sign to allow all genders made sure that caretakers of young and old alike were able to fulfill their needs while in our space. It eliminates any awkwardness of going into the "wrong" restroom and lets the needs of the person caretaking or being taken care of come first. This is particularly important when we have disabled audience members at our shows, whether that's a sensory friendly show made especially for those who need adjusted environmental stimuli or our winter musical where families have one of the only chances of the year to attend a show all together.

Our staff has also benefited from these simple changes. We've seen an increase in applications to work for us from those in the trans and non-binary communities due to a clear feeling of safety and inclusion in our space, and we've been able to retain those in that community already on staff because they felt their needs were seen and heard by their employer. It provides access for everyone to have a bathroom closer to them instead of walking across our campus to the one bathroom that they feel comfortable in. This makes bathroom breaks more efficient in addition to safer. This also allows anyone who is nursing or caretaking to be able to work without these barriers. Because of the freelance life so many of our artists live, there isn't always the option for a long maternity or paternity leave. The second best thing an employer can provide is the ability to be a caretaker and an artist simultaneously and easily.

Finally, we are working constantly to expand our programming to a wider audience, and when that begins to happen we need to be ready for anyone to walk through our doors without doubt about their access options. Our recent production of *Beauty and the Beast*, for example, drew national attention with a Black non-binary actor playing Belle and a disabled actor as the Beast. There were people from communities of color, people from the trans community, and other disabled folks eager to see this representation finally on stage who came to our theater for the first time (and therefore likely to the many businesses around us - restaurants etc.). If we aren't ready for these new audience members, our work is for naught. We will only see them once. If we are a clearly safe state with clearly safe places of business, though, they may return for other shows (or, in a bigger sense, other products).

Beyond these many benefits to businesses, the primary reason for the importance of this bill is in acknowledging the existence and humanity of the many members of Maryland's trans, non-binary, gender non-conforming communities. They are already at a disadvantage when it comes to barriers to access, healthcare, and housing, but beyond that they are at larger risk for violence simply going about their everyday needs (like using a bathroom). This risk is even higher for Black and Brown communities under these gender non-conforming umbrellas. It may be an ongoing process to combat this issue through our arts work in changing hearts and minds, but changing restroom signage was something that took no time at all and protects members of our community that we've been fighting to get into our spaces for a long time now. Every business should want such a simple and clear first step to expanding their patron base, and every human should want to take such a simple action to make sure their neighbors and fellow citizens are seen and valued. All of the marketing in the world can't bring business to a space that feels unsafe for the customer, but the word-of-mouth that comes from them being actively included and seen as a full member of the economy and community here in Maryland should be seen as a key part of remaining "open for business." We can't be open as people or as places without being open to *everyone*.

Contact: Jenna Place, Associate Artistic Director/Casting Director
301.924.4485 ext. 134 / jenna@olneytheatre.org

SB 0486_HB 572_ipr_fav.pdf

Uploaded by: Kathryn Adams

Position: FAV



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

CONGREGATION OF FREDERICK
Spirituality · Community · Justice

10 February 2022

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Frederick enthusiastically supports SB 0486 and HB 572.

Our congregation has had gender inclusive bathroom signs since 2019. This change is in line with our religious values, and our practices as a Welcoming Congregation for people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, or Gender Nonbinary. We are part of the larger Unitarian Universalist Association, which holds that “Being welcoming means striving for radical inclusion, and creating spaces that honor every part of our identities, backgrounds, and experiences.”

Gender neutral bathrooms are just bathrooms. Gendered bathrooms, however, are excluding, presenting the options for people to use a bathroom that doesn’t conform to their identity, face physical and emotional harassment, deep discomfort, even violence or arrest for being in the ‘wrong’ bathroom. We call on Maryland to pass SB 0486 and HB 572.

Signage that shows what is in the bathroom is helpful for transgender people, gender non-binary people, gender queer people, the disability community, and the elderly community who need assistance. This change makes our congregation welcoming and comfortable for all. Congregants desired this change, the Board of Trustees supported the change, and it has helped us live into our values.

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Frederick enthusiastically supports SB 0486 and HB 572.

The Rev. Dr. Carl Gregg, minister
minister@frederickuu.org

Kathryn Adams, Intern Minister
internminister@frederickuu.org

Support HB 0572 - The Greener Kitchen.pdf

Uploaded by: KYLE HARVEY

Position: FAV



Support HB 0572

February 16, 2022

**The Greener Kitchen
Economic Matters Committee
Testimony for HB 0572**

Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings - Gender Inclusive Signage (The Open to All Act)

Thank you to the House committee for hearing HB 0572 the Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings - Gender Inclusive Signage (The Open to All Act) today. The Greener Kitchen prioritizes having gender inclusive restrooms in our space because we believe in making our restaurant open to all. Ensuring that everyone feels comfortable when entering the restroom, whether for themselves, or as a caretaker for another person, is a core component of the overarching mission of our business. Creating a welcoming space for all by incorporating gender inclusive signage has only been a benefit to us as a business. Our business is located at 803 Washington Blvd, Baltimore, MD 21230, and we were excited to see Baltimore City Council pass 19-0385 in 2019, on which HB 0572 was based. Codifying equity is the right thing to do, and as a business, we know it will make Maryland a safer and more welcoming place for our residents, as well as for tourists.

We have seen firsthand how eliminating barriers to restroom access by making our restroom gender inclusive has had an incredibly positive effect. Our customers know they can come to our business and receive respect and dignity, and they have let us know how powerful that is in their daily lives. Some of our transgender customers seek us out because they know that they will receive basic courtesies that are absent in other places of public accommodation, and that they won't have to be under scrutiny for what bathroom they enter. Hearing those stories lets us know how impactful such legislation can be in the everyday lives of Marylanders. We're proud to run such a business, and to be pushing for positive growth on many fronts.

This legislation is good for business, good for Marylanders, and is a simple way to update our laws so we can compete on a national level. Maryland will join Washington D.C. Nevada, Illinois, and Vermont on the national level, as well as Baltimore City, the City of Salisbury, and Howard County locally in enacting this legislation, and our business avidly supports this legislation.

Please vote in support of HB 0572 the Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings - Gender Inclusive Signage (The Open to All Act).

Support SB 0486 - The Greener Kitchen.pdf

Uploaded by: KYLE HARVEY

Position: FAV



Support BB 0486

February 15, 2022

The Greener Kitchen
Judicial Proceedings Committee
Testimony for SB 0486

Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings - Gender Inclusive Signage (The Open to All Act)

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Please vote in support of SB 0486 the Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings - Gender Inclusive Signage (The Open to All Act).

SB 486_DDCoalition_FAV .pdf

Uploaded by: Lauren Kallins

Position: FAV



MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COALITION

Dedicated to the rights and quality of life for people with developmental disabilities in Maryland

Economic Matters Committee

February 15, 2022

Senate 486: Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings - Gender-Inclusive Signage

Position: Support



8601 Robert Fulton Dr
Suite 140
Columbia, MD 21046



1500 Union Avenue
Suite 2000
Baltimore, MD 21211



8835 Columbia 100 Pky
Suite P
Columbia, MD 21044



**Maryland Developmental
Disabilities Council**

217 E Redwood Street
Suite 1300
Baltimore, MD 21202



7000 Tudsbury Road
Windsor Mill, MD
21244

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Coalition (DD Coalition) is comprised of five statewide organizations that are committed to improving the opportunities and outcomes for Marylanders with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). As such, the DD Coalition supports SB 486.

People with disabilities require a variety of support needs, including for personal care. It is not unusual for a person with a disability to be supported by someone of a different gender—whether a family member or a direct support professional—and this can create a barrier to access when only gender-specific bathrooms are available. Gender-neutral bathrooms remove this arbitrary barrier to everyday comfort for people with disabilities.

We are appreciative of the sponsor's inclusion of language requiring both text and symbol on any sign. This enables all members of the public to quickly identify the location of an appropriate bathroom facility.

This legislation moves our State one step closer towards full equity for all Marylanders.

Contact:

Rachel London, Executive Director, Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council
rlondon@md-council.org

Support SB 0486 - Trans Maryland.pdf

Uploaded by: Margo Quinlan

Position: FAV

Trans Maryland
16501 Shady Grove Road #7742
Gaithersburg MD 20898



Senate Bill 486
Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 15, 2022
Position: Support

Trans Maryland is a multi-racial, multi-gender community power building organization for Maryland's trans community. **We enthusiastically support SB 486, Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings - Gender Inclusive Signage (Open to All Act)**. This bill equitizes bathroom access for all Maryland residents state-wide. Maryland's transgender (trans) and intersex communities face specific challenges when accessing basic bodily needs such as restrooms, healthcare, housing, and personal safety when moving about in public, and this bill lowers that barrier to access.

Gender non-conformity has existed since the beginning of time. Due to the violence of colonial systems, trans persons are subjected to violence at higher rates; this rate is even higher for Black and Brown nonbinary and gender expansive trans people. Black trans people face an almost 3x higher risk of abuse in places of public accommodations than white trans people, according to the latest US Trans Survey ([2015 US Transgender Survey](#)).

Nonbinary, gender non-conforming, gender expansive, and intersex people who do not have a binary gender presentation/expression (female or male) are often forced to choose a non-affirming (and potentially dangerous) restroom, or to incur health problems like urinary tract infections as a result of being precluded from using a public restroom. Being perceived as entering the "wrong" restroom is dangerous, increasing the likelihood of violence, and reinforces the minority stress disproportionately incurred by Maryland's trans communities.

Creating an inclusive and safe environment is essential to strengthening Maryland's economy. Governor Larry Hogan stated in 2015, "Maryland is open for business." This bill is crucial to ensuring Maryland can compete for business with nearby states that have already codified law on this matter. Maryland has a chance to join forward thinking nearby jurisdictions in their policies to equitize bathroom access for all people. Those cities include Washington DC which codified this in 2006 and Philadelphia, PA in 2016. Additionally, Maryland's own Baltimore City codified this in 2019, the City of Salisbury did so in 2020, and Howard County codified this in 2021.

Equitizing access to bathrooms means those who need assistance from caretakers will not face scrutiny for going into the "wrong" restroom. Access to changing facilities for babies should be available to all, so people of all genders and gender expressions caring for a child can change their baby. This can include trans men who are fathers and caretakers, gay men (transgender or cisgender) who are parents, and grandparents of any gender who care for a baby. No parent or caretaker should have to change a baby on the floor because changing tables are only available in women's restrooms.

Trans Maryland asks that you support SB 486. This crucial piece of legislation will benefit many current and future residents, in addition to those who travel to the state of Maryland. For these reasons, **we urge a favorable report on SB 486.**

For more information, contact Lee Blinder, Executive Director of Trans Maryland at lee@transmaryland.org

Open to All Act, Senate Bill (SB 486) written test

Uploaded by: Maria Aragon

Position: FAV

SB 486 Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings - Gender-Inclusive Signage
February 15, 2022

Position: Support

My name is Maria Aragon, and I am writing to wholeheartedly support bill 486, Open to All Act. This bill is a step into creating non-discriminatory spaces for people of different gender identities and accessibility needs. As someone who was born and raised in Maryland, I felt shunned due to outward and subtle anti trans messaging. It wasn't until I was older that I realized I was not the only trans person who felt similar. Thanks to the work of advocates and allies, there has been a change of atmosphere to create visibility and awareness. This does not mean that it is still safe to come out as transgender. The UCLA School of Law Williams Institute estimates, as of 2016, there is slightly over 22,000 transgender individuals in Maryland, however I know in my heart that there are many more transgender folks still unable to identify themselves publicly out of fear. This is why creating accessible spaces, even to use the restroom is an opportunity for a trans person to feel safer.

When I was a student at the University of Maryland, I spearheaded an initiative to create an all gender restroom with the simple change of signage and inclusive welcoming language for The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center. This Performing Arts Center is a major part of the arts ecology in Maryland and receives various artists and audiences from all over the nation. As a result of creating this inclusive restroom, artists from varying gender identities are now able to perform without the fear of discrimination. This inclusive practice is also seen at the Stamp Student Union at the University of Maryland which houses over 40,000 students. Creating inclusive spaces is possible, not difficult, and has a real impact on the physical well being for trans people to live full lives.

Thank you,

Maria Aragon, maria.aragon973@gmail.com

SB486_jpr_fav.pdf

Uploaded by: Mark Eckstein

Position: FAV



February 15, 2022

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

We are writing in **SUPPORT of SB486** - Inclusive Public Restrooms.

This bill would require that single-occupancy public restrooms be marked with gender-inclusive signage, and would provide a safe and accessible public restroom for anyone, regardless of gender. We believe in creating welcoming and affirming spaces for everyone, including public accommodations for transgender and gender-expansive individuals.

Sex-segregated bathrooms can be dangerous places for someone who identifies outside of traditional gender roles. According to a study done by the National Center for Transgender Equality, more than 60% of transgender individuals avoid the use of public restrooms out of fear of harassment and ridicule. Something so simple as using a public restroom can be the source of immense anxiety and fear for an already vulnerable and marginalized community.

Single-occupancy restrooms not only benefit transgender people but can also accommodate single-mothers, young children, families, elderly, and those with disabilities. Occupying public spaces is something which we all take for granted ... until we enter a space that is not meant for us. Using public restrooms comfortably and safely is something all Marylanders deserve.

We urge a **Favorable Report SB486**.

Thank you,

Nicolle Campa She|Her
Board President

Mark Eckstein He|Him
Advocacy Co-Chair, Maryland

www.pflagdc.org

Keeping Families Together!

Metro DC PFLAG is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, volunteer organization founded in 1983 and oversees sixteen (16) PFLAG Community Groups across Washington D.C., Maryland and Virginia. As a chapter of PFLAG, we strive to promote the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons and their families and friends through support, education, and advocacy to end discrimination and secure equal rights.

TESTIMONY-HB0572-SB0486.pdf

Uploaded by: Michele Schlehofer

Position: FAV



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.

SB 486 - Places of Public Accommodation and Public

Uploaded by: Michelle Siri

Position: FAV

BILL NO.:	Senate Bill 486
TITLE:	Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings - Gender-Inclusive Signage
COMMITTEE:	Judicial Proceedings
DATE:	February 15, 2022
POSITION:	SUPPORT

Senate Bill 486 would require any single-occupancy bathroom in a place of public accommodation or in a public building, to be marked with gender-inclusive signage, rather than an indication that the restroom may only be used by a specific gender.

Restrooms that are accessible to all provide a welcoming space for everyone, including nursing mothers, individuals with disabilities, and parents of young children. They also protect gender neutral and transgender citizens from harassment. Non-gendered restrooms already exist in many places, and are required in Baltimore City, Washington, DC, and Philadelphia, among others. Complying with the bill is easy and offers a practical way to make all feel welcome and safe.

While this action may seem small and inconsequential, this bill will build a more inclusive and affirming community for everyone, and in particular transgender and non-binary Marylanders. As such, the Women's Law Center of Maryland urges a favorable report on SB 486.

The Women's Law Center of Maryland is a private, non-profit, legal services organization that serves as a leading voice for justice and fairness for women. It advocates for the rights of women through legal assistance to individuals and strategic initiatives to achieve systemic change, working to ensure physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy for women in Maryland.

SB486 Gender-Inclusive Bathroom Signage .docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Sen. Cheryl Kagan

Position: FAV

CHERYL C. KAGAN
Legislative District 17
Montgomery County

Vice Chair
Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs Committee

Joint Audit Committee
Joint Committee on Federal Relations



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301-858-3134 · 410-841-3134
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Cheryl.Kagan@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SB486: Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings – Gender-Inclusive Signage **Senate Judicial Proceedings and Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs Committees** **Tuesday, February 15, 2022 | 1:00 PM**

We all use public, single-occupancy bathrooms on a regular basis-- in planes, hospitals, our homes, and more. Making these restrooms gender-specific (female/male) restricts access and can create discomfort.

Women face longer wait times for bathrooms ([an average of 6+ minutes](#)) than men, who are delayed by approximately just 11 seconds. Labeling restrooms with signage for any gender can reduce wait times for women to [less than 1.5 minutes](#).

Gender-inclusive restrooms are family-friendly, enabling parents to assist their children. They are also more accessible and comfortable for people with caregivers.

Trans- and non-binary people can be at risk when using gender-specific facilities. In a national survey, [60% of transgender people](#) avoid public restrooms due to apprehension about being confronted. This is a real fear-- [12% have been verbally harassed; 9% were denied access; 1% were physically attacked; and 1% were sexually assaulted](#). In fact, [36% of trans- or non-binary students](#) with restricted bathroom or locker room access reported being sexually assaulted in 2019.

[SB486](#) requires a simple, inexpensive fix to make **ALL** feel welcome! Many buildings already have single-occupancy restrooms; this bill just requires them to affix an inexpensive, gender-neutral sign to the bathroom door.

This bill dovetails well with [SB330](#) (Public Buildings - Diaper-Changing Facilities), sponsored by Senator Smith (2019) since a changing table in a gender-inclusive bathroom is accessible to any child's caretaker.

The penalty is modest for non-compliance:

- The first offense is a warning;
- After 30 days, if the business does not comply, a \$100 fine may be assessed; and
- If after another 30 days, the business still does not put up a sign, it will be fined \$250 for the third and subsequent violations.

If passed, Maryland will join five states, four major cities, and Baltimore and Howard Counties in making its single-user bathrooms open and inclusive for ALL.

I urge a favorable report on SB486.

SB 486 Bathroom gender signage support POG.pdf

Uploaded by: Tami Goldsmith

Position: FAV



Testimony in Support
SB 486 Places of Public Accommodations and Public Buildings –
Gender Inclusive Signage
Judicial Proceedings
February 15, 2022
By Ken Capone

Background: People On the Go Maryland builds community through diversity and inclusion. We respect the individuality of our members and are committed to making inclusion a priority so that everyone feels comfortable, valued, and heard. People On the Go remains distinct by maintaining a cross-disability strategy that focuses on effecting positive change in the lives of people with and without disabilities.

Rationale: We are testifying in support of SB 486 Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings - Gender-Inclusive Signage. I, along with many people with disabilities require daily supports. Like many people with disabilities do, I have 2 direct support professionals of the opposite gender who assist me with my daily needs. When we go out and I have to go to the bathroom I usually have to wait until I get home if there's only gender specific bathrooms available and that's not good for anybody to have to wait to go to the bathroom. But if there were gender neutral bathrooms available I, with my direct support staff would feel comfortable going in. We are appreciative of the sponsor's inclusion of language requiring both text and symbol on any sign. This enables all members of the public to quickly identify the location of an appropriate bathroom facility.

Thank you

MCCR Support with Amend. SB 486.pdf

Uploaded by: Glendora Hughes

Position: FWA

State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

"Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination."



Officers

Alvin O. Gillard, Executive Director
Cleveland L. Horton II, Deputy Director
Nicolette Young, Assistant Director
Glendora C. Hughes, General Counsel
Kara N. Hunt, Ph.D., Director of Education & Outreach

Governor
Larry Hogan
Lt. Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford
Commission Chairperson
Stephanie Suerth, MPA, CCEP
Commission Vice Chairperson
Janssen E. Evelyn, Esq.
Commissioners
Diane E. Bernier
Eileen M. Levitt, SPHR, SHRM-SCP
Rabbi Binyamin Marwick
Magdalena S. Navarro, MSc
Gary C. Norman, Esq.
Jeff Rosen
Gina McKnight-Smith, PharmD, MBA

February 15, 2022

Senate Bill 486 - Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings – Gender-Inclusive Signage Support with Amendment

Dear Chairpersons Smith and Pinsky, and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings and Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committees:

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights ("MCCR"; "The Commission") is the State agency responsible for the enforcement of laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, health services and state contracts based upon race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, and physical and mental disability.

Senate Bill 486 requires that single-occupancy bathrooms have signage posted that does not use pictorial representation, and only uses descriptive language, such as the words "restroom" or "bathroom". Counties and municipalities are charged with enforcing the bill's provisions for places of public accommodation within their respective jurisdictions, and the bill authorizes the counties and municipalities to set and collect fines (with caps) to cover the costs associated with enforcing this bill.

While the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights is supportive of initiatives to enhance inclusivity across the State, MCCR is again concerned about the bill's mandate on counties and municipalities being placed in Title 20 of the State Government Article ("SGA Title 20"). Currently, MCCR has sole authority to enforce the State's anti-discrimination laws enshrined in SGA Title 20. There exists no qualifier within SGA Title 20 granting units of local government the authority to enforce any provision of SGA Title 20. By inserting a provision to be enforced by local governments within SGA Title 20, MCCR is concerned that the provision may be overlooked by those entities charged with enforcement.

Therefore, MCCR respectfully suggests that these bills provisions would be better placed in the **Local Government Article**. This would ensure that the bill's provisions are clearly accessible to counties and municipalities in a section of the Maryland Code that is reserved for mandates placed on their respective units of government.

MCCR's Biennial Civil Rights & Fair Housing Gala Celebration: April 30, 2022

William Donald Schaefer Tower, 6 Saint Paul Street, Suite 900, Baltimore, Maryland 21202-1631
Phone: 410-767-8600 • Toll Free: 1-800-637-6247 • Maryland Relay: 711 • Fax: 410-333-1841
Website: mccr.maryland.gov • E-Mail: mccr@maryland.gov

For these reasons, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights supports a favorable vote of SB 486 with amendments. Thank you for your time and consideration of the information contained in this letter. The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights looks forward to the continued opportunity to work with you to improve and promote civil rights in Maryland.

Olooney-ExcessiveRestrooms-220214.pdf

Uploaded by: Mickey Papillon

Position: FWA

February 14, 2022

PRINCIPALS

John Francis Torti, FAIA, FCNU
Thomas M. Gallas, CPA
Lawrence V. Antoine, FAIA, AICP
Robert S. Wallach, AIA
Daniel Ashtary, AIA
Charles G. Coleman, III, RA
Sherief Elfar, AIA
Neal I. Payton, FAIA
Erik J. Aulestia, AICP
Troy E. McGhee, AICP
Brian E. O'Looney, AIA
Sarah Alexander, AIA
Scott A. Welch, AIA
Micheal D. Rollison
Stephanie Farrell, AIA
Greyson H. Goon
Jonathan A. Johnson, AIA
F. Nesli Dogrusoz, CDT
William Fears
Diane M. McCloskey, CPA
Jeremy Sharp, AIA

DIRECTOR SHAREHOLDERS

Felix C. Deloatch
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Omer Mushahwar
Gilbert Rocca, RA

EMERITUS

Sylvia S. Munero
Bruce D. Kennett, AIA
Cheryl A. O'Neill, AICP

The Honorable Will Smith

Senate Judicial Proceedings Comm.
2nd Floor, Senate Office Building

The Honorable Shane A. Pendergrass
The Honorable CT Wilson
Health & Government Operations/
Economic Matters Committee
House Office Building

Re: Favorable with Amendments - HB572//SB486 - Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings - Gender-Inclusive Signage

Dear Chairman Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, Chairman Pendergrass and the Health and Government Operations Committee, and Chairman Wilson and the Economic Matters Committee

I am in support of the equity goals of HB572 / SB486 and, want to propose an amendment to help the bill more easily comply with current building codes.

My concern is that local code officials may begin to interpret a 'requirement' for additional restroom facilities because the fixture counts would no longer be met as fixtures are switched from gender-defined to gender neutral facilities. The state adopted model building codes [IBC, etc.] have very specific requirements for a minimum number of gender-defined facilities, and if facilities are no longer specifically designated, some code officials may interpret a need for more facilities to meet the minimum requirements. Essentially, for the purpose of building codes, it would be helpful to all building owners if gender inclusive restrooms can count for the minimum counts of either/both genders, to avoid triggering a perceived requirement for additional unnecessary restroom facilities.

Conceptual Amendment to HB572//SB 486 - Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings - Gender-Inclusive Signage:

"The facilities within single-occupancy public restrooms, while being marked with gender-inclusive signage, can be counted by the building owner toward the Minimum Number of Required Plumbing Fixtures for either the male or female genders, as required under the adopted International Building Code. No code or other public official shall require additional gendered restroom facilities to be built, to meet Minimum Fixture Calculations or for any other reason, due to the redesignation of facilities; further all new or existing restroom fixtures and facilities marked with gender-inclusive signage shall be allowed to be allocated toward the Minimum Number of Required Plumbing Fixtures for either the male or female genders under the adopted International Building Code, as determined by the needs of the building owner."

The language within the building codes is unfortunately vague and unclear regarding the assignment of gender-neutral restrooms, necessitating the request for this amendment. Again, I am in support of the intent behind this bill, and with the amendment above, would strongly support its passage in Maryland. However, in its current form it could be detrimental to all commercial and civic building owners, increasing the risk for the imposition of unnecessary costs to all non-residential construction.

I would be happy to answer any questions, or please feel free to contact Sushant Sidh (Sushant.sidh@capitol-strategies.com) or myself (information below) with any questions.

Sincerely,



Brian O'Looney, AIA, LEED AP BD+C
Principal

SB486_RestaurantAssoc_Thompson_INFO.pdf

Uploaded by: Melvin Thompson

Position: INFO



Senate Bill 486

**Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings –
Gender-Inclusive Signage**

February 15, 2022

Position: INFO

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

The *Restaurant Association of Maryland* has worked with the sponsors of this legislation to address our concerns. As a result, this legislation includes a warning for a first violation, allows at least 30 days for compliance between an initial violation warning and the second violation fine, clarifies allowable signage, and includes grandfathering language for signage in use before October 1, 2022.

For these reasons, we have no opposition to this legislation and sincerely appreciate that the sponsors worked with us to address our concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Melvin R. Thompson".

Melvin R. Thompson
Senior Vice President
Government Affairs and Public Policy