



## LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

Bill: **HB 0369/SB 0377 Marriage Records-Name Change**

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

Submitted by: Michele Copper, Board Member

Position: **FAVORABLE**

### **SALISBURY PFLAG SUPPORTS**

I am submitting this testimony in FAVOR of HB 0369/SB 0377 on behalf of PFLAG Salisbury, the Salisbury, Maryland Chapter of PFLAG National.

The Marriage Records-Name Change bill would create procedures for modification of marriage certificates in the event of a name change of either of the parties. Further, the bill would allow for replacement of gendered language on marriage certificates (e.g., “husband” and “wife”) with gender neutral language.

Many people who are transgender, nonbinary, or agender seek name changes as part of the process of their gender transition. Research finds that changing one’s name is not only an affirming act, but can also serve to mitigate social determinants of health by improving people’s access to medical and mental health care and reducing people’s exposure to the stress of being misgendered, which combined result in improved mental health. In short, legal name changes improve the health, well-being, and safety of transgender, nonbinary, and agender 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. The State of Maryland should be facilitating this process. Thus, it is our position that adoption of procedures for name changes and removal of gendered language on state-issued marriage certificates is in keeping with the best interests of both transgender, nonbinary, and agender Marylanders and the State of Maryland.

Salisbury PFLAG supports HB 0369/SB 0377 and recommends a FAVORABLE report in committee.