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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

**House Bill 40 – Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings -
 Gender-Inclusive Signage**

House Economic Matters Committee – February 8, 2023

SUPPORT

Background: HB40 would require that all signage for single-occupancy restrooms in places of public accommodation use gender inclusive symbols that do not use pictorial representations and contain only descriptive language, such as “restroom” or “bathroom.”

Written Comments: Single occupancy restrooms are helpful and convenient for those with special needs; elders who need assistance; or individuals who simply might otherwise have to wait in line because bathrooms are gendered.

SB84 would not require restrooms to be altered in any way, but rather simply lays out how signage must look so that everyone can feel comfortable when using a single-occupancy restroom.

The Baltimore Jewish Council represents The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore and all its agencies, including Jewish Community Services (JCS), Comprehensive Housing Assistance Inc. (CHAI), and CHANA. Each of these organizations provide services to Maryland’s rapidly growing aging populations. Likely one of the places a caregiver is needed most, these individuals can often feel excluded when accompanying those who they are assisting to a restroom. As we witness the aging demographic grow, it is imperative that we enact policies that support *all* Marylanders.

Five states have already taken the step to make single-occupancy bathrooms more inclusive, as well as Baltimore City, Howard, and Montgomery Counties in Maryland. **With this in mind, the Baltimore Jewish Council urges a favorable report of HB40.**

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies, and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.