



DATE: February 8, 2023 **COMMITTEE:** House Economic Matters
BILL NO: House Bill 40
BILL TITLE: Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings - Gender-Inclusive Signage
POSITION: Support

Kennedy Krieger Institute supports House Bill 40 - Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings - Gender-Inclusive Signage

Bill Summary:

House Bill 40 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 and students 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 disabilities who requires caregiver(s), and/or Direct Support Professionals (DSP) to assist them with their toileting needs. Single occupancy bathrooms assure privacy by being able to lock the restroom door. 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 House Bill 40.