



# City of Salisbury

John "Jack" R. Heath, Mayor

February 2, 2023

Committee: Economic Matters Committee

Testimony on: HB40 – Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings – Gender-Inclusive Signage

Position: Favorable

Dear Members of the Environmental Affairs Committee,

As you consider the merits of **HB40**, I ask that you **support** this vital legislation and vote to give **HB40** a **favorable** Committee report.

The City of Salisbury supports HB40, 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." Our Administration recognizes 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 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 we take pride in proclaiming that all are welcome in our city, it is our 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 in 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 place 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,

  
Julia Glanz  
City Administrator

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