

**Dan Simons**

**Co-Owner, Founding Farmers, Farmers & Distillers, Farmers Fishers Bakers,  
Founding Spirits, Founding Farmers Co. Catering & Events  
Founder, Our Last Straw**

My name is Dan Simons; I'm a co-owner of seven restaurants, a distillery, and a catering company. One of my restaurants, called Founding Farmers, is located in Montgomery County, Maryland. My other restaurants are in DC, Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony to Senate Bill 84 ([SB0084](#)). I am grateful to Senator Cheryl Kagan for filing this important civil rights bill. I am writing to offer my support to this bill.

I am a businessperson and a restaurateur. I have more than 30 years of experience in the restaurant industry, and I have been an owner for the past 17 years. While I understand the impact unnecessary regulations can have on a business, I also believe we as business owners, and a society, can do a much better job providing adequate, safe, and fair accommodations for every guest and client that walks through our doors. It is also baseless to oppose all regulations – I can give testimony as a business owner that there are plenty of regulations that are ineffective and burdensome, and plenty that are sensible. Any regulation should be judged on the merits of its intent and the outcomes it creates.

In our restaurants, we have worked to ensure that every human is welcome to use whatever bathroom they identify with. We have signage on our restaurant doors that says: "Women: In Mind, Body, or Spirit" and "Men: In Mind, Body, or Spirit." Our bathrooms have multiple stalls in them. We also have a one stall bathroom at our Founding Farmers DC location with a sign that says "All of Us." We have received only positive feedback over the years... in person, in writing, and often over social media channels. In the case of this proposed legislation, Senator Kagan is suggesting that single bathrooms – like airplane bathrooms – should be able to accommodate EVERYONE, regardless of how they identify. This is a no-brainer. This is the simplest of simple first steps. There is no logical reason to say this kind of accessibility would cause harm or have any downside. I see only upside with being more open, and more inviting – I know a little something about how hospitality, kindness, and understanding are the currency. So whether you want to prioritize the heart or the dollars, this bill is easy to support.

As business owners, we can do better to help foster a more tolerant and hospitable world.  
*We have to do better.*

Thank you for allowing me to comment on this bill.