

Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair  
Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

SB 761

March 15, 2023

1:00 pm

In Support

I am Faran Lee Elowyn, a transgender woman who has lived in Maryland for most of her life. I am testifying in favor of SB 761.

I support this bill because transgender, nonbinary, and intersex people are at a greater risk of discrimination and violence than their cisgender peers. According to the National Center for Transgender Equality, transgender inmates are 10 times more likely to be sexually assaulted by a fellow inmate. They are also five times as likely to be sexually assaulted by staff. Additionally, staff often deny transgender inmates medical care. Gender-nonconforming people of color are especially vulnerable to abuse in the prison system.

If we as a society are going to respect gender-nonconforming people, we must respect them even if they are prisoners. If a transgender person commits wrongdoing, it is still imperative that we treat them as the gender they are. This is not only for their sake but the sake of gender-nonconforming people who are not incarcerated. It is especially important in a time when our country is experiencing a rise in anti-trans rhetoric.

One's basic human rights should not be forfeited once they fall into the prison system. This goes for transgender, nonbinary, intersex, and all prisoners from marginalized communities. To end discrimination toward gender-nonconforming people by correctional officials and staff, we must ensure that their human rights remain intact.

I ask you to support SB 761.

Faran Lee Elowyn