



Testimony on HB426
Transgender Respect, Agency, and Dignity Act
Position: **Favorable**

To Chair Clippinger and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Brige Dumais (pronouns: they/them), and I am the Political Coordinator with 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. We are the largest healthcare workers union in the United States with over 10,000 members in Maryland/DC. Our represents members who work at LGBTQ community health centers, and members who are LGBTQ themselves. We urge a **favorable** report on HB426: Transgender Respect, Agency, and Dignity Act because it will protect transgender, nonbinary, and intersex inmates who face a staggering amount of discrimination and violence while incarcerated.

What the bill does:

- Allows LGBTQ individuals to request transfer to gender appropriate facilities based on their housing preferences & overall safety concerns.
- Prohibits discrimination from an employee of a correctional facility against inmates on the basis of certain protected classes, including but not limited to ethnicity, disability, pregnancy status, age, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Why the bill is needed:

LGBTQ inmates are more likely to be victims of violence than the general population, and LGBTQ individuals are more likely to be placed in solitary confinement due to being victims of violence. Studies have shown that solitary confinement has long term, adverse impacts on inmate's mental health.

When enacted, this legislation can help improve the mental health of transgender inmates, and help maintain physical health by reducing violence against transgender inmates. 1199SEIU holds a fundamental believe that everyone – no matter their gender or whether or not they are incarcerated – deserves to live a healthy and safe life, free from discrimination. Please vote yes on this bill.

In Unity,

Brige Dumais, they/them
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