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Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Monday, February 3, 2025

SB0314 – Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

Position: **FAVORABLE**

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and Esteemed Members of the Finance Committee:

My name is Ronnie L. Taylor, and I serve as the Community Advocacy Manager at FreeState Justice, a nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing legal and systemic inequities affecting Maryland's LGBTQ+ community. I write to you in strong support of **Senate Bill 0314**, the Birth Certificate Modernization Act.

SB0314 addresses the significant challenges transgender and nonbinary individuals face in obtaining accurate identification documents. Currently, the process to amend the sex designation on birth certificates in Maryland can be cumbersome and invasive, often requiring medical documentation or court orders. This bill seeks to simplify the process by allowing individuals to self-attest to their gender identity, thereby reducing barriers to obtaining accurate identification.

Accurate identification is crucial for accessing essential services, securing employment, and ensuring personal safety. According to the Movement Advancement Project, as of now, 16+ states and Washington, D.C., allow residents to select an "X" gender marker on their driver's licenses, reflecting a growing recognition of nonbinary identities.

SB0314 proposes the following key changes:

1. **Self-Attestation:** Individuals can request a new birth certificate with a sex designation that differs from the original without the need for medical documentation or court orders.
2. **Inclusion of Nonbinary Option:** The bill introduces an "X" gender marker option, acknowledging and validating nonbinary identities.

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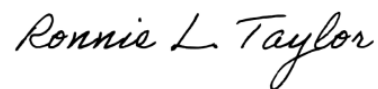
3. **Confidentiality Protections:** The new birth certificate will not be marked as amended, ensuring the individual's privacy.

These provisions align Maryland with a growing number of jurisdictions that have modernized their vital records systems to be more inclusive. For instance, jurisdictions like California and New York have implemented similar measures, allowing individuals to amend their birth certificates without requiring proof of surgery or court orders.

In my role at FreeState Justice, I have worked with numerous individuals who have faced significant obstacles due to inaccurate identification documents. This bill would alleviate the challenges they face by providing a straightforward process to obtain accurate identification.

In closing, I respectfully urge the committees to issue a favorable report for **SB0314**. This legislation not only addresses a critical gap in our current system but also reinforces Maryland's commitment to equity and inclusion for all its residents.

Best,



Ronnie L. Taylor

Source:

1. [Movement Advancement Project | Identity Document Laws and Policies](#)