

Ellis Murphy

7th Congressional district of Maryland

Maryland Legislative District 40

2/3/2025

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB0314

Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation

(Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

TO: Chair Beidle, Chair Smith, and members of the Senate Finance & Judicial Proceedings Committees

My name is Ellis Murphy. I'm a student and a working resident of Maryland. I'm testifying about my experience related to the frustration and inaccuracies regarding my birth certificate. I was not born in Maryland; I was born in another state that does not allow self-attestation for the sex designation on birth certificates. Because I am transgender, I have been seeking out medically approved treatment options for transgender individuals including, but not limited to, medication and social changes. For me this also involves changing my records to better reflect my gender identity and medical changes. However, my birth state has made this process more complicated. Although my birth state previously allowed self-attestation, in the last few months they have changed the process and have stopped allowing self-attestation changes to go through and now only allow changes in cases of clerical errors or inaccuracies (that can only be resolved by medical documents from the time of birth). Due to this I will, at least for the time being, not be able to alter my birth certificate. That alone is frustrating, but this problem is made more complicated for me because I want to apply for a passport. I'm afraid if my documents don't line up that my passport will be delayed, or the sex will be marked incorrectly anyway (which could cause confusion when travelling and verifying my identity). I don't want my fellow Marylanders to have to deal with this (or any other situation related to legal documents) unnecessary problem. This is especially considering that the MVA already allows self-attestation of the sex marker on IDs along with many other states. Not everyone has the ability to get a letter from a physician for a court order to change their sex designation, and I believe that everyone should have the ability to change all of their documents to accurately reflect their gender identity in their every day life through self-attestation. Passing this bill would help align Maryland's identification process with the MVA process as well as matching the trends other states are already following. Additionally, passing the bill will help decrease the labor needed by the state to change the designation by simplifying the process. It will also decrease potential issues that may arise from inaccurate/mismatching documentation from well-meaning Marylanders who need legal documents that accurately reflect them and how they operate day-to-day.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony and your consideration of this matter. I hope you consider my testimony in your decision.