



**Maryland Commission  
on LGBTQIA+ Affairs**

**Bill Title:** Public Health - Maryland Commission on Health Equity - Advisory Committee and Hospital Reporting

**Bill Number(s):** [HB0474/SB0129](#)

**Position:** FAVORABLE

**Date:** January 27, 2025

**Submitted by:** Jeremy Browning, Director of the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs

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**To:**

House Health and Government Operations Committee

The Hon. Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair  
The Hon. Bonnie Cullison, Vice Chair

Senate Finance Committee

The Hon. Panela Beidle, Chair  
The Hon. Antonio Hayes, Vice Chair

**Testimony on behalf of the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs:**

The Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs, created by the Maryland General Assembly, works to serve LGBTQIA+ Marylanders by galvanizing community voices, researching and addressing challenges, and advocating for policies that advance equity and inclusion. The Commission envisions a Maryland where all LGBTQIA+ people can live full and authentic lives. As a vital resource, the Commission collaborates with public officials, agencies, and community partners to ensure the rights and dignity of LGBTQIA+ Marylanders are protected and respected.

We write to express our strong support for House Bill 474 and Senate Bill 129, which mandates the Maryland Commission on Health Equity, in coordination with the Maryland Department of Health, to establish a health equity measures advisory committee. This committee is tasked with identifying the ten most significant disparities in healthcare quality, access, or outcomes for vulnerable populations and reviewing annual health equity reports submitted by licensed hospitals in the state.

The proposed legislation would identify disparities based on gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, sex, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and geographic location, bringing greater awareness to the specific health disparities affecting LGBTQIA+ and other vulnerable communities. Additionally, the requirement for hospitals to submit health equity reports and

publish them publicly ensures accountability and transparency, allowing for community engagement in addressing health inequities.

LGBTQIA+ individuals often face unique health challenges, including higher rates of mental health issues, substance use disorders, and barriers to accessing culturally competent care. By implementing the provisions of this bill, Maryland can take proactive steps to improve data collection, promote inclusive practices, and reduce health disparities for LGBTQIA+ communities.

The Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs believes that HB0474 and SB0129 are vital bills that will advance health equity across our state. We urge the House Health and Government Operations Committee and the Senate Finance Committee to issue favorable reports on these bills.