

February 3, 2025

The Honorable Pamela G. Beidle
Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Testimony

IN SUPPORT OF

Senate Bill #314: Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards -
Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

To the Chairs, Vice Chairs, and esteemed members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing today to express my strong support for Senate Bill 314, the Birth Certificate Modernization Act. This bill will ensure all Marylanders can have access to accurate and affirming birth certificates without unnecessary barriers. This bill removes outdated obstacles that currently hinder transgender Marylanders from obtaining updated, accurate birth certificates with respect to names and gender markers. Birth certificates are essential for securing other identity documents, employment, and services, making it crucial that we ease the burden on those seeking updates.

My own experience in updating my documents was frustratingly complex and unnecessarily long, taking over nine (9) months. Living in rural Harford County, I had to make multiple 70-mile round trips to get the necessary documentation, as well as an additional 70-mile round trip to the Division of Vital Records. This does not take in to account the additional administrative costs from providers. Without supportive resource guides from organizations like Trans Maryland, I likely would have had further difficulties navigating the process. These hurdles create real burdens for people who simply want their identity document to reflect who they are.

This bill is a simple yet impactful change. It aligns the Division of Vital Records' policies with those of the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration and Maryland Clerks of Court, as well as policies already in place in multiple other states. By creating a uniform process, we remove unnecessary delays, reduce administrative burdens, and ensure

Marylanders receive the documents they need without undue hardship. In my work as an intern, I have seen firsthand how inconsistencies in state policies create real harm to families, particularly those with limited resources. The lack of clarity forces individuals to navigate unnecessary hurdles which exacerbates stress and financial strain.

SB314 is not a radical change, but it is a necessary one. SB314 will have a significant impact by simply aligning Maryland with best practices already adopted in other states and internally at other agencies. It ensures dignity in a difficult process while preventing inconsistencies that disproportionately harm those most in need.

I strongly urge the committee to find a favorable report on SB314 and help Maryland take this meaningful step toward justice and inclusion for all Marylanders.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Chloe Kastner

District 34B