

Legislative testimony 2025 birth cert final final

Uploaded by: Abbie Ellicott

Position: FAV

Abbie M. Ellicott
682 Dill Ct
Severna Park MD 21146
Anne Arundel County, D31

TESTIMONY in SUPPORT of SB314 Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

2/3/25

TO: Chair Beidle, Chair Smith and members of the Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Abbie M. Ellicott, for the Coalition for LGBTQ+ Students

My name is Abbie Ellicott, I live in Anne Arundel County and I represent the Coalition for LGBTQ+ Students. I am writing to indicate my strong **SUPPORT for SB314**, or the Birth Certificate Modernization Act.

I support this bill because it is an Important step in protecting the civil rights, safety and well-being of transgender people in Maryland, by removing unnecessary barriers to modifying one's gender designation on official documents.

Changing a birth certificate gender marker is an important part of gender affirmation for transgender people. Having a gender marker that corresponds with one's gender identity lowers the risk of harassment, discrimination, and negative health outcomes. Changing a gender designation on official documents is essential for transgender people because it means their official IDs will accurately reflect their legal identity. It is often required to obtain other legal documents. When an official gender marker does not match a person's gender identity, this can lead to discrimination in areas including medical care, legal proceedings, employment, housing and social stigma. It also has an adverse impact on the transgender person's psychological state and overall safety, as it makes them more vulnerable to harassment, trauma and marginalization.

Research from Brown University School of Public Health shows that legal gender marker and name change is associated with lower negative responses to gender-based mistreatment and better mental health outcomes among trans populations. Experts on trans health and human rights point out that possessing an accurate government ID is often necessary to access healthcare, housing, education and employment and these are resources from which trans people continue to be excluded and denied access.

We need to make it easier for transgender citizens in Maryland to modify their gender marker on official documents for practical reasons. It makes no sense to require that transgender people get a physician's statement to make this modification. Being transgender is not a medical

condition, so a physician's statement should not be needed. This antiquated requirement places an unfair burden on the transgender person, who is already navigating huge hurdles in obtaining medical care. It puts a burden on medical providers who are already too busy. Doctors are likely to charge a patient for providing a physician's statement because they cannot bill insurance for this service; this creates more financial stress for the transgender person.

Some lawmakers seek to deny the existence of transgender people. All over the country, lawmakers including our current President, want to erase the rights and identities of transgender citizens. They do not accept that transgender people have existed since the beginning of time and will not disappear or be intimidated into silence. We should not make life harder for transgender people. SB314 removes barriers for transgender members in our community and conveys respect and acceptance for them as human beings who (like all of us) simply want to live their lives with dignity.

For all these reasons, legal gender affirmation is critically important and should be easily accessible for all transgender citizens in Maryland. Please support SB314

SB314 - Google Docs.pdf

Uploaded by: Amy Isler

Position: FAV

Senate Bill 314
Finance and Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 5, 2025
Position: Favorable

Esteemed Chair Beidle, Chair Smith and members of the Senate Finance and Judicial Proceedings Committees, my name is Amy Isler. I am a former high school English teacher in Baltimore County Public Schools, mother of two children, and a constituent of Maryland District 44A. **I support SB 314, Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act).** It's important that parents be able to easily prove they are related to their own children after a legal name change through the Maryland courts.

Codifying this process makes good common sense for lots of reasons. It follows the lead of other states, and it follows the guidelines already in place at other Maryland government agencies, like the MVA. Most of all, this bill eases the burden of accessing accurate administrative documents for the trans community. As a parent who has had to go through name changes in the past, I know what a bureaucratic headache it can be, completing forms, gathering documentation, making appointments, and taking time off of work, only to be told you are missing one piece, or need to have something notarized. A bill that can streamline and simplify processes, while also affirming peoples' gender identities is absolutely a win-win.

For these reasons, I **urge a favorable report on SB 314. Thank you.**

SB 314 birth certificate bill.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Annapolis Pride

Position: FAV



Board of Directors

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(he/him)

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(he/him)

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Eric Lund

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Nicole McCoy

(she/her)

Jessica Parsell

(she/her)

Jayne Walters

(she/her)

Tim Williams

(he/him)

BILL: Senate Bill 314 - Birth Certificate Modernization Act

DATE: February 3, 2025

POSITION: FAVORABLE

COMMITTEE: Finance

CONTACT: Christine Feldmann | Annapolis Pride Board Member

Annapolis Pride's mission is to advocate for, empower, and celebrate the LGBTQ+ community in Anne Arundel County to live fully and authentically. Our vision is a safe, equitable, and anti-racist community where people of all identities thrive. As such, the Board of Directors of Annapolis Pride **supports** Senate Bill 314, the Birth Certificate Modernization Act.

For transgender and nonbinary individuals, having identification that accurately reflects their identity is essential for safety, dignity and full participation in society. A birth certificate is a fundamental document used in many aspects of life, from obtaining employment and housing to accessing healthcare and traveling. When this document is inaccurate, it creates unnecessary barriers, exposing individuals to discrimination, harassment and even violence.

Many states have already adopted policies that allow for changes to birth certificates without burdensome legal hurdles. These policies acknowledge the lived realities of transgender and nonbinary people and recognize their right to self-determination.

This bill is not just about paperwork—it is about affirming the dignity of every person. It recognizes that every individual deserves to be seen, respected and protected under the law. By passing this bill, Maryland can take an important step toward equity and inclusion, ensuring that transgender and nonbinary individuals are treated with the same respect and recognition as everyone else.

The new federal administration has sent a clear message that trans and non binary Americans won't be protected or even recognized nationally. Maryland has an opportunity to set itself apart as a welcoming state with the passage of this bill.

Accordingly, Annapolis Pride respectfully requests a **favorable** committee report on Senate Bill 314..

SB0314 Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identi

Uploaded by: Ayla Hurley

Position: FAV

Ayla Hurley
6385 Windharp Way
Columbia, MD 21045
District 13

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB0314 Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification
Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

1/29/2025

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

FROM: Ayla Hurley

Members of the Senate Finance & Judicial Proceedings Committees, my name is Ayla Hurley, I live in Columbia, Maryland, and I am writing to urge you to support SB 314, the Birth Certificate Modernization Act.

As mundane and effort-ridden as updating any personal paperwork is, ensuring that all of the information contained therein is correct and accurate is essential. Streamlining individuals' ability to ensure that all of their relevant personal documentation accurately reflects one's identity - including birth certificates, drivers licenses, and state ID cards - will save time, effort, money, and people-hours at a number of levels throughout state operations. 14-16 other states have similar systems in place to do just what this bill will do, and Maryland will be a safer place for its marginalized citizens in joining their ranks.

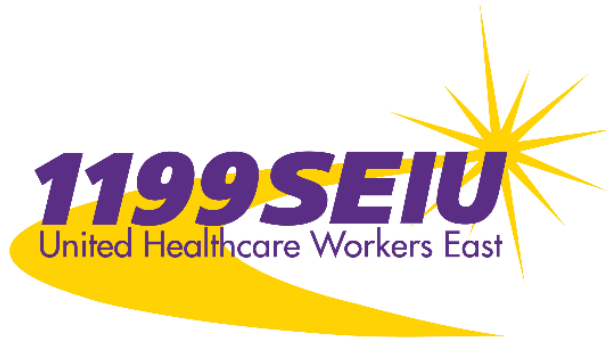
This will help Marylanders prove their relationships to their own children, will correctly reflect Maryland parents' with X gender markers on their children's birth certificates, and will ensure that all birth certificates are able to be updated for accuracy. Especially with the uphill battles coming up at various levels of government, I want our Marylanders to be able to live their authentic selves with safety and support. As a cisgender Marylander myself, I want my trans and non-binary loved ones' lives to be supported by our state legislature, and this is a huge step towards creating that safe, supported environment for them in their everyday lives.

In a time of increasing visceral uncertainty over trans and non-binary folks' safety, I urge you to please support SB 314 and provide one solace for the future. Thank you.

SB314 BCMA 1199 FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Brige Dumais

Position: FAV



Testimony on SB314
Birth Certificate Modernization Act
Position: Favorable

To Chair Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee;

My name is Brige Dumais, and I am the Political Coordinator of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. We represent over 10,000 members in Maryland/DC. Our union represents members who work workers at Federally Qualified Health Centers that serve the LGBTQ+ community, and members and staff who are LGBTQ+. We urge a **favorable** report on SB314: Birth Certificate Modernization Act to clarify that an X marker is permitted on Maryland birth certificates.

Under current policy, physicians must write and sign gender marker change forms. **Enacting SB314 will reduce administrative duties on healthcare providers**, allowing them to spend more time providing high quality healthcare to their patients. Maryland is experiencing a critical short staffing crisis in healthcare. **Decreasing administrative tasks for healthcare workers wherever possible is essential for mitigating the high rates of burnout caused by chronic understaffing.**

Transgender people often face a lot of barriers when it comes to accessing healthcare, including but not limited to challenges in using various systems like patient portal and/or attending medical or mental health appointments.

When this bill is enacted, any person who both lives in Maryland and was born in Maryland will not require medical or any other documentation for a gender marker change. This improves quality of life for transgender people and removes administrative tasks on overburdened healthcare providers. We urge a **favorable** report on this bill. Thank you.

In Unity,

Brige Dumais (they/them)
1199SEIU, Political Coordinator
443-243-2078

SB 314 Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identi

Uploaded by: Catherine OMalley

Position: FAV

BILL NO:	Senate Bill 0314
TITLE:	Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)
COMMITTEE:	Finance/Judicial Proceedings
HEARING DATE:	February 5, 2025
POSITION:	SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

Senate Bill 0314, which alters the circumstances under which the Secretary of Health is required to issue a new certificate of birth following a change in sex designation, as well as modifies the options available for indicating an individual's sex designation on state-issued identification cards, represents a significant and inclusive step forward in recognizing the rights and dignity of transgender and gender non-conforming individuals. From a legal perspective, this bill upholds fundamental principles of autonomy, privacy, and equal protection under the law by ensuring that individuals can accurately and respectfully reflect their gender identity in both vital records and identification documents.

A core principle in civil rights law is the right to self-identify, particularly when it comes to issues of identity and personal autonomy. For transgender individuals, the ability to change their sex designation on a birth certificate or state-issued identification is essential for their social and legal recognition. This bill creates a framework where transgender individuals are no longer forced to live in a state of legal dissonance—where their gender identity is inconsistent with official records—thereby reducing the risk of discrimination, harassment, and harm. By altering the circumstances under which a new certificate of birth can be issued, the bill ensures that these changes are made in a way that is both respectful and consistent with the individual's own self-determined identity.

Moreover, the bill's provisions regarding the Motor Vehicle Administration's issuance of updated licenses and identification cards further enhance the accessibility and accuracy of identity documentation. The inclusion of an option to indicate an individual's sex designation, which may include options beyond the binary categories of male and female, acknowledges the existence and validity of non-binary and gender-expansive identities. By providing clear guidelines for when and how an individual's sex designation can be updated on their birth certificate and other legal documents, the bill also ensures that these processes are standardized and equitable, avoiding the inconsistencies and discriminatory practices that have historically plagued transgender individuals seeking recognition of their gender identity.

To reconcile the provisions of this bill with potential conflicts in recent Executive Orders, we propose the amendment below to comply with shifting federal regulations without forcing Marylanders to misrepresent their gender identity on state-issued documents. This provision supports Maryland's approach to gender designation while protecting transgender and gender-nonconforming residents.

In cases where federal law requires sex designation on government-issued identification documents, including passports, visas, and Global Entry cards, to conform with specific definitions or criteria, the Maryland Department of Health's Department of Vital Records will support individual requests to complete the DS-10 Birth Affidavit instead.

The Women's Law Center strongly supports SB 0314 for promoting the dignity and safety of our trans and gender non-conforming community. Executive Orders come and go with each presidential administration; with SB 0314, Maryland has the opportunity to protect our people in perpetuity.

The Women's Law Center of Maryland is a non-profit legal services organization whose mission is to ensure the physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy of women in Maryland. Our mission is advanced through direct legal services, information and referral hotlines, and statewide advocacy.

BILL SB 314 .pdf

Uploaded by: Cecile Taylor

Position: FAV

Bill SB 314

Birth Certificate Modernisation Act

Date of hearing: 02/05/2025

SUPPORT

Dear Chair Senator Pamela Beidle, Finance Committee, and Chair William C. Smith, Judicial Proceeding Committee,

My name is Cecile Taylor. I live in Anne Arundel County, and I am a retired School-Health-Registered Nurse. I am writing to indicate my strong **SUPPORT FOR SB 314**, the Birth Certificate Modernisation Act.

Having an X marker allows people the freedom to avoid traditional binary beliefs (beliefs which categorise all individuals as exclusively male or female) about gender if they so choose. The option shows that our County and State acknowledge and respect those who identify as binary, intersex, or gender non-conforming. Respect decreases violence.

Trans bigotry is dangerous. I know of a person who lives in Washington, DC, and who has been attacked several times because their clothing does not match who people think they are. This person feels outcast, depressed, unrecognised and excluded.

Exclusion has serious consequences on mental health, ability to be employed, go to the restaurant, the gym, and have a normal social life. Each of us must have the right to live undiscriminated and be recognised for whom we are without fear. Too many lives are lost by suicide because of this kind of discrimination (ref. "More trans teens attempted suicide after states passed anti-trans laws, a study shows" NPR, 09/26/2024).

Having a X marker on every legal document allows one to be employable. Two legal documents are usually required to be hired, to obtain health insurance, get a driver's license, get a social security card, get a passport, and obtain any document that requires two pieces of identification. Said two documents must match in name and gender. Unfortunately, in the US right now, that usually includes a birth certificate.

Not having matching documents with name and gender is discriminatory. Non binary people have the same rights to exist in our county as anybody else. Allowing them to have the X marker on their birth certificate is a recognition that they exist, are employable, and can live their life as anybody else.

The second part of the Birth modernisation Act requires one to provide a medical note from a health care provider which specifies the person's gender in order to obtain a birth certificate that matches their driving license, health insurance card, passport, or any other legal document. This is wrong:

1. The World Health Organisation and Cleveland Clinic, as well as other well known medical organisations, have concluded that being a non binary, trans, gay, lesbien, queer is not a medical condition (ref. [https://www.who.int/standards/classificationredefined gender, violence](https://www.who.int/standards/classificationredefined%20gender%20violence)).

2. It is expensive:

-It requires one to set an appointment with a health care provider and pay a co-pay; health care providers frequently refuse to write letters acknowledging the gender denomination of a client. Many folks also do not have sick leave from their work..and remember, this is not a sickness. If their work does allow them sick leave, these people would rather use those few days of sick live for an actual medical ailment.

- Health care providers are not paid to write the letter. Insurance companies do not have a code to reimburse the provider. How can they justify the cost of their time without making a false claim?

- Many folks do not have money to pay a visit up front. Many LBGTQIA+ Marylanders face economic hardship. "While there are significant numbers of LGBTQ+ Marylanders at all income levels, they are more likely than their straight, cisgender counterparts to live on low incomes". According to Advent Health Care, a medical visit without health insurance in Maryland costs between \$150 and \$300(ref. <https://mdeconomy.org/we-can-do-more-to-support-marylands-500000-lgbtq-residents> ; <https://www.adventhealth.com/primary-care-plus/blog>).

For all those reasons, I am asking our Council Members to add to the bill SB 314 the marker X and to remove the obligation to provide a medical note to obtain a gender change on the birth certificate. Please support SB314.

SB0314_Birth_Certificate_Modernization_Act_MLC_FAV

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR SB0314

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

Bill Sponsor: Senator Lam

Committee: Finance

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: **FAVORABLE**

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB0314 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Our members work hard to support the members of our community that need extra voices to speak for them. We understand that not everyone fits into a tidy definition of male and female, and that our society is entirely geared to those designations.

This bill would allow for individuals who do not fit into those tidy definitions to get their birth certificate amended to allow for a different designation of other, or unspecified. Furthermore, the bill allows for the change of a parent's name, and ensures that these changes will not result in the new birth certificate saying that it was amended.

We believe flexibility should exist in our institutions to match the flexibility in which people define themselves.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

SB0314 - Birth Certificate Modernization Act - Tes

Uploaded by: Charlotte Hoffman

Position: FAV



Charlotte Persephone Hoffman, Esq. (they/she)
Policy Director
charlotte@transmaryland.org

February 5, 2025

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

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Testimony of Trans Maryland

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 Finance and Judicial Proceedings Committees:

Trans Maryland is a multi-racial, multi-gender, trans-led community power building organization dedicated to Maryland's trans community. Trans Maryland runs the state's largest name and gender marker change program, offering peer-to-peer guidance and financial assistance to Marylanders seeking a name and gender marker change. As part of this work, we have helped hundreds of transgender Marylanders update their identity documents, and we have witnessed firsthand the barriers that existing law creates to trans Marylanders trying to obtain ID documents that affirm their identity and human dignity.

Fortunately, Senate Bill 314, the Birth Certificate Modernization Act, will significantly reduce these barriers in three key ways. First, it will create a standardized process by which transgender parents can update their own information on their children's birth certificates, which will make it easier for parents to establish their relationship with their children without outing themselves as trans or their children as having transgender parents. Second, the bill will remove the requirement for transgender people to have the sign off of a medical provider before they can change the gender marker on their own birth certificate—a change that has already been adopted by 14 other states, including Idaho, Nevada, Michigan, and Illinois. Finally, the bill will clarify that individuals may change their Maryland birth certificate to use an X gender marker (defined in the bill as



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“unspecified or another” gender), bringing Department of Health practice in line with the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration, which has issued X gender markers per a statutory mandate since 2019.

Making it Easier for Parents to Amend Their Information on Children’s Birth Certificates

For parents across Maryland, there is no document more important for establishing your relationship with your child than that child’s birth certificate. Whether you are registering your child up for school, applying for health insurance or public benefits, or simply making sure you have all your documents in order before traveling, your child’s birth certificate is your best evidence to prove that you are, in fact, their parent. This is doubly true for parents whose relationship with their own child is often questioned, whether they be adoptive parents, parents in multiracial couples, LGBTQIA+ parents, or a mix of all three.

Unfortunately, there is currently no law, regulation, or standardized departmental process by which transgender parents may update their information on their children’s birth certificates. Because of this, many trans parents must provide a stack of documentation to prove that they are in fact the parent listed on the birth certificate, outing themselves in the process, as well as potentially setting their child up for discrimination because they have a trans parent.

Because there is no law or guidance on this issue, many trans parents seeking to update their children’s birth certificates are told by staff at the Division of Vital Records that it is impossible to do so or that they must first obtain a court order. Other times, the Division of Vital Records will issue an amended birth certificate that strikes out the parent’s former name in a way that is often still readable. While some few are lucky and are given a new (not amended) birth certificate for their child that properly updates the parent’s information without outing them as trans, the process is largely a roll of the dice, with some parents having to come back multiple times or even file a costly (and time-consuming) petition with the court.

The Birth Certificate Modernization Act streamlines this whole process, allowing parents to change their information by submission of a simple form and a copy of their court-ordered name change. This will not only simplify matters for trans parents like myself, it will also increase productivity within the Division of Vital Records, as staff will now have a clear process to point to when such requests are made. No longer will each staffer be required to reinvent the wheel.



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Removal of Requirement for Medical Sign-Off for Gender Changes

Under existing Maryland law, adopted a decade ago in 2015, transgender people born in Maryland may change the gender marker on their Maryland birth certificate by submitting either a court order recognizing their gender identity or a form signed by a medical provider affirming that they have undergone treatment related to their gender identity. The Birth Certificate Modernization Act will streamline this process by eliminating the need for transgender people to acquire medical sign-off, reducing costs for both the individual and the state, decreasing burdens on our already overworked healthcare system, and bringing Maryland law in line with that of 14 other states that already permit self-attestation of gender identity on birth certificates.

Requiring trans people to provide a sign-off from a medical provider is a disproportionate burden on low-income and under-insured trans Marylanders. Many of Trans Maryland's program participants do not have primary care providers, face challenges in finding affirming providers who will take them on as a client because they live in rural areas or underserved suburbs, or simply do not have the time off work or the economic resources for the multiple office visits that are often required.

Even those who do have a regular affirming provider find that getting gender designation letters can be an administrative nightmare, with medical providers frequently filling the forms out incorrectly, failing to provide the forms in a timely manner, or requiring the patient to liaise with multiple different offices to get the form. Our program participants have experienced wait times of over 5 months for an appointment with their medical provider, only to have the provider fail to complete the form accurately for several more months after that initial appointment. This lack of access negatively impacts that transgender individual's ability to ensure their ID documents match, and prevents the individual's ability to seek employment without disclosing their transgender status.

In my own personal case, my provider—a Federally Qualified Health Center specializing in care for the LGBTQIA+ community—required me to make the request not with my doctor, but with the clinic's legal office, where I conducted an intake with a paralegal (in which I repeated information already known by the provider). The paperwork was then sent to my doctor, who signed off on it, then sent it back to the office's legal department. Finally, it was eventually sent back to me. I estimate that this entire process took multiple staff hours of time just to sign a simple form. Had I not been an expert on these issues who worked in transgender law and policy, there is a strong chance I would have been discouraged by the entire process and stopped before I ever got my



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paperwork finalized. The Birth Certificate Modernization Act will eliminate this burden and risk for other trans Marylanders, so they will not have to go through the same Byzantine process I had to go through.

But while the Birth Certificate Modernization Act will allow trans individuals to self-attest to our gender identity on Maryland Birth Certificates, it will not open the floodgates to fraud or ill-intent. While the bill removes the requirement for medical sign-off, it *adds* a provision requiring the affirmation of gender identity to be made under penalty of perjury. As such, any effort to change one's gender marker for a fraudulent or criminal purpose could be punished not only for the underlying crime (e.g., fraud), but also for perjury. As such, we strongly believe the Birth Certificate Modernization Act strikes the balance between easing administrative burdens on transgender people, while ensuring accuracy of information.

Finally, because the state ultimately pays at least part of the cost of many of these appointments with health care providers—whether through Medicaid, ACA marketplace plans, or individuals on the state employee health plan—eliminating these unnecessary medical visits will ultimately help to combat Maryland's current deficit, one appointment at a time.

Availability of Third Gender Marker (X) on Maryland Birth Certificates

In 2019, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation instructing the Motor Vehicle Administration to permit individuals to select the third gender marker of X, defined in statute as “unspecified or other,” in lieu of the traditional M or F designations. Unfortunately, because the 2019 legislation did not directly address the question of Maryland birth certificates, it has led to uncertainty as to whether the Department of Health may also allow people born in Maryland to change their gender marker on their birth certificate to an X. The Birth Certificate Modernization Act ends this uncertainty by expressly stating the Department of Health may use X markers on birth certificates and by making a tiny amendment to the 2019 MVA legislation (changing “other” to “another”) to better match legislation and policies in other jurisdictions.

Currently, 16 states (including Utah) and the District of Columbia permit the selection of a third gender marker (typically an X) on birth certificates, meaning Maryland would be far from unique on this front. The X gender marker is already permitted on Maryland driver's licenses and state ID cards—the Birth Certificate Modernization Act merely brings the Department of Health policy in line with law the General Assembly passed by an overwhelming margin six years ago.



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Policy Director
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What the Birth Certificate Modernization Act Will Not Do

It is crucial to remember that the Birth Certificate Modernization Act is at its core a bill to modernize the process by which the Department of Health issues birth certificates with updated information for transgender individuals and their children. Despite likely fearmongering from opponents, the bill does not substantively change Maryland law or policy in other arenas.

In particular, the Birth Certificate Modernization Act *will not*:

- *Change the medical standards of care for transgender adults or youth;*
- *Affect how housing decisions are made for incarcerated transgender people;*
- *Alter existing processes for obtaining driver's licenses or state IDs;*
- *Amend Maryland's nondiscrimination or hate crimes laws, which already treat gender identity as a protect class;*
- *Change how gender is designated on birth certificates at the time of birth; or*
- *Allow individuals to change the gender designation on their Maryland birth certificate for fraudulent or criminal purposes.*

Conclusion

Senate Bill 314 is a straightforward procedural bill designed to make it easier for transgender individuals to update their own and their children's birth certificates to more accurately reflect who they are, so that they and their families are not unnecessarily subjected to discrimination when required to present the birth certificate as an identity document. It implements changes Maryland has already had in place for six years for driver's licenses and state ID cards—changes that have not in that time caused the sky to fall and have not opened a Pandora's box of unanticipated problems. Instead, it has merely improved the ability of transgender Marylanders to obtain affirming ID documents and minimize risk of discrimination. As we have established, this is all the Birth Certificate Modernization Act will do as well.

For these reasons, Trans Maryland urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 314.

SB0314 - Birth Certificate Modernization Act - Tes

Uploaded by: Charlotte Hoffman

Position: FAV



Charlotte Persephone Hoffman, Esq. (they/she)
Policy Director
charlotte@transmaryland.org

February 5, 2025

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Testimony of Trans Maryland

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 Education, Energy, and the Environment and Judicial Proceedings Committees:

Trans Maryland is a multi-racial, multi-gender, trans-led community power building organization dedicated to Maryland's trans community. Trans Maryland runs the state's largest name and gender marker change program, offering peer-to-peer guidance and financial assistance to Marylanders seeking a name and gender marker change. As part of this work, we have helped hundreds of transgender Marylanders update their identity documents, and we have witnessed firsthand the barriers that existing law creates to trans Marylanders trying to obtain ID documents that affirm their identity and human dignity.

Fortunately, Senate Bill 314, the Birth Certificate Modernization Act, will significantly reduce these barriers in three key ways. First, it will create a standardized process by which transgender parents can update their own information on their children's birth certificates, which will make it easier for parents to establish their relationship with their children without outing themselves as trans or their children as having transgender parents. Second, the bill will remove the requirement for transgender people to have the sign off of a medical provider before they can change the gender marker on their own birth certificate—a change that has already been adopted by 14 other states, including Idaho, Nevada, Michigan, and Illinois. Finally, the bill will clarify that individuals may change their Maryland birth certificate to use an X gender marker (defined in the bill as



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Unfortunately, there is currently no law, regulation, or standardized departmental process by which transgender parents may update their information on their children’s birth certificates. Because of this, many trans parents must provide a stack of documentation to prove that they are in fact the parent listed on the birth certificate, outing themselves in the process, as well as potentially setting their child up for discrimination because they have a trans parent.

Because there is no law or guidance on this issue, many trans parents seeking to update their children’s birth certificates are told by staff at the Division of Vital Records that it is impossible to do so or that they must first obtain a court order. Other times, the Division of Vital Records will issue an amended birth certificate that strikes out the parent’s former name in a way that is often still readable. While some few are lucky and are given a new (not amended) birth certificate for their child that properly updates the parent’s information without outing them as trans, the process is largely a roll of the dice, with some parents having to come back multiple times or even file a costly (and time-consuming) petition with the court.

The Birth Certificate Modernization Act streamlines this whole process, allowing parents to change their information by submission of a simple form and a copy of their court-ordered name change. This will not only simplify matters for trans parents like myself, it will also increase productivity within the Division of Vital Records, as staff will now have a clear process to point to when such requests are made. No longer will each staffer be required to reinvent the wheel.



Charlotte Persephone Hoffman, Esq. (they/she)
Policy Director
charlotte@transmaryland.org

Removal of Requirement for Medical Sign-Off for Gender Changes

Under existing Maryland law, adopted a decade ago in 2015, transgender people born in Maryland may change the gender marker on their Maryland birth certificate by submitting either a court order recognizing their gender identity or a form signed by a medical provider affirming that they have undergone treatment related to their gender identity. The Birth Certificate Modernization Act will streamline this process by eliminating the need for transgender people to acquire medical sign-off, reducing costs for both the individual and the state, decreasing burdens on our already overworked healthcare system, and bringing Maryland law in line with that of 14 other states that already permit self-attestation of gender identity on birth certificates.

Requiring trans people to provide a sign-off from a medical provider is a disproportionate burden on low-income and under-insured trans Marylanders. Many of Trans Maryland's program participants do not have primary care providers, face challenges in finding affirming providers who will take them on as a client because they live in rural areas or underserved suburbs, or simply do not have the time off work or the economic resources for the multiple office visits that are often required.

Even those who do have a regular affirming provider find that getting gender designation letters can be an administrative nightmare, with medical providers frequently filling the forms out incorrectly, failing to provide the forms in a timely manner, or requiring the patient to liaise with multiple different offices to get the form. Our program participants have experienced wait times of over 5 months for an appointment with their medical provider, only to have the provider fail to complete the form accurately for several more months after that initial appointment. This lack of access negatively impacts that transgender individual's ability to ensure their ID documents match, and prevents the individual's ability to seek employment without disclosing their transgender status.

In my own personal case, my provider—a Federally Qualified Health Center specializing in care for the LGBTQIA+ community—required me to make the request not with my doctor, but with the clinic's legal office, where I conducted an intake with a paralegal (in which I repeated information already known by the provider). The paperwork was then sent to my doctor, who signed off on it, then sent it back to the office's legal department. Finally, it was eventually sent back to me. I estimate that this entire process took multiple staff hours of time just to sign a simple form. Had I not been an expert on these issues who worked in transgender law and policy, there is a strong chance I would have been discouraged by the entire process and stopped before I ever got my



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paperwork finalized. The Birth Certificate Modernization Act will eliminate this burden and risk for other trans Marylanders, so they will not have to go through the same Byzantine process I had to go through.

But while the Birth Certificate Modernization Act will allow trans individuals to self-attest to our gender identity on Maryland Birth Certificates, it will not open the floodgates to fraud or ill-intent. While the bill removes the requirement for medical sign-off, it *adds* a provision requiring the affirmation of gender identity to be made under penalty of perjury. As such, any effort to change one's gender marker for a fraudulent or criminal purpose could be punished not only for the underlying crime (e.g., fraud), but also for perjury. As such, we strongly believe the Birth Certificate Modernization Act strikes the balance between easing administrative burdens on transgender people, while ensuring accuracy of information.

Finally, because the state ultimately pays at least part of the cost of many of these appointments with health care providers—whether through Medicaid, ACA marketplace plans, or individuals on the state employee health plan—eliminating these unnecessary medical visits will ultimately help to combat Maryland's current deficit, one appointment at a time.

Availability of Third Gender Marker (X) on Maryland Birth Certificates

In 2019, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation instructing the Motor Vehicle Administration to permit individuals to select the third gender marker of X, defined in statute as “unspecified or other,” in lieu of the traditional M or F designations. Unfortunately, because the 2019 legislation did not directly address the question of Maryland birth certificates, it has led to uncertainty as to whether the Department of Health may also allow people born in Maryland to change their gender marker on their birth certificate to an X. The Birth Certificate Modernization Act ends this uncertainty by expressly stating the Department of Health may use X markers on birth certificates and by making a tiny amendment to the 2019 MVA legislation (changing “other” to “another”) to better match legislation and policies in other jurisdictions.

Currently, 16 states (including Utah) and the District of Columbia permit the selection of a third gender marker (typically an X) on birth certificates, meaning Maryland would be far from unique on this front. The X gender marker is already permitted on Maryland driver's licenses and state ID cards—the Birth Certificate Modernization Act merely brings the Department of Health policy in line with law the General Assembly passed by an overwhelming margin six years ago.



Charlotte Persephone Hoffman, Esq. (they/she)
Policy Director
charlotte@transmaryland.org

What the Birth Certificate Modernization Act Will Not Do

It is crucial to remember that the Birth Certificate Modernization Act is at its core a bill to modernize the process by which the Department of Health issues birth certificates with updated information for transgender individuals and their children. Despite likely fearmongering from opponents, the bill does not substantively change Maryland law or policy in other arenas.

In particular, the Birth Certificate Modernization Act *will not*:

- *Change the medical standards of care for transgender adults or youth;*
- *Affect how housing decisions are made for incarcerated transgender people;*
- *Alter existing processes for obtaining driver's licenses or state IDs;*
- *Amend Maryland's nondiscrimination or hate crimes laws, which already treat gender identity as a protect class;*
- *Change how gender is designated on birth certificates at the time of birth; or*
- *Allow individuals to change the gender designation on their Maryland birth certificate for fraudulent or criminal purposes.*

Conclusion

Senate Bill 314 is a straightforward procedural bill designed to make it easier for transgender individuals to update their own and their children's birth certificates to more accurately reflect who they are, so that they and their families are not unnecessarily subjected to discrimination when required to present the birth certificate as an identity document. It implements changes Maryland has already had in place for six years for driver's licenses and state ID cards—changes that have not in that time caused the sky to fall and have not opened a Pandora's box of unanticipated problems. Instead, it has merely improved the ability of transgender Marylanders to obtain affirming ID documents and minimize risk of discrimination. As we have established, this is all the Birth Certificate Modernization Act will do as well.

For these reasons, Trans Maryland urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 314.

SB314 - Birth Cert - Kastner - FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Chloe Kastner

Position: FAV

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

SB314_CSWEENEY_FAVORABLE.pdf

Uploaded by: Christopher Sweeney

Position: FAV

SB 314 SUPPORT

Christopher Sweeney
3922 Dunnel Ln
Kensington, MD 20895
District 18

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 314
Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation
(Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

February 3, 2025

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

Members of the Finance and Judicial Proceedings Committees, I am a lifelong resident of Montgomery County, Maryland and I am writing to support the Birth Certificate Modernization Act (SB 314). This bill should be uncontroversial in that it is simply about making sure important government documentation can be updated for accuracy. It provides clarity and certainty to trans individuals and their family members on how to ensure birth certificates accurately reflect the individuals involved.

My sibling, who is transgender nonbinary, struggled to update their child's birth certificate to accurately reflect their name and gender as the parent. In other words, it was a challenge to figure out the process to update government-issued documentation so that my sibling could prove that they were their child's parent, despite the fact that they physically birthed their child. There is no reason for this to be a complicated or confusing process, and state identification documents should be accurate.

This bill will ensure that individuals like my sibling can update important documentation with less confusion. There is no good reason why trans individuals should not have the same access and ease of access to government resources, including updating state-issued identifying documents, that everyone else does.

I urge you to support SB 314 to help ensure all Marylanders have the same access to accurate government-issued documentation.

Respectfully submitted,



Christopher Sweeney

SB314 Favorable 2025.pdf

Uploaded by: Debi Jasen

Position: FAV

Senate Bill 314 - Finance Committee - FAVORABLE

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Finance Committee;

Please give Senate Bill 314 the Birth Certificate Modernization Act, a Favorable report.

Under the Trump/ Musk regime, where scientific articles have been erased from government websites and doctors have been threatened, it's more important than ever to pass legislation that recognizes the existence of transgender people. Medical personnel are already refusing to provide gender-affirming care, including to adults, due to fear of government retribution. While there's still a concern about the costs of doctor's appointments and paperwork, there's now the additional concern that transgender people won't even be able to find gender-affirming doctors where they live. Please trust that transgender people know who they are and support Senate Bill 314. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Debi Jasen
Pasadena, MD

SB0314_TestimonyInSupport_EM.pdf

Uploaded by: Ellis Murphy

Position: FAV

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.

EmilyShaw_SB0314_Favorable_2025_0203_Finance.pdf

Uploaded by: Emily Shaw

Position: FAV

**Testimony Favorable to SB0314:
Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation
(Birth Certificate Modernization Act)**

February 5, 2025

Senator Pamela Beidle, Chair, Senator Antonio Hayes, Vice-Chair, and esteemed members of the Finance Committee:

My name is Emily Shaw and my pronouns are she/her. I'm a resident of Montgomery County, wife, and parent. As someone who knows how critical having accurate official documents can be for accessing services and rights, I believe it is discriminatory and unfair to hinder people from correcting their government documentation to match their identity. I therefore strongly support SB0314 and am seeking your committee's favorable report without amendments.

As someone who works in data management, I've had a view into how our official personally identifying information can help or harm us unexpectedly. Even small documentation differences - a name that has an accented letter in one place but not another, an inconsistently recorded compound last name - can result in lost applications, delayed benefits, and lost time. When the documentation difference is more substantial, as is the case where a parent or birth certificate holder has changed their name or public gender presentation, the consequences can be much more serious. My transgender friends, colleagues and neighbors can face substantial obstacles when they can't easily obtain accurate birth certificates for their children or themselves.

In Montgomery County, in order for a parent to register their child for school they are asked to show a birth certificate. The birth certificate confirms both their child's age and the child's relationship to their parent, enabling the county to link the child's district residency status to their parent's. It is possible to find a way around using a birth certificate through additional cost and legal process. But clearly, the birth certificate is the central form of proof of belonging of the child to the parent, and all the resources and benefits that come with that relationship.

Meanwhile, for the individual owning the birth certificate, that document is also our country's fundamental statement of their American citizenship. For people who change their name or documented gender, there are increasingly serious consequences for having mismatched identity documents. Having an inaccurate birth certificate can cause serious complications in hiring. Similarly, the 2024 SAVE Act is likely to be brought back again this year. If made law, it will bar people across the US from voting unless they show proof of citizenship - which, if you lack a passport, will be a driver's license plus birth certificate. Mismatched birth certificate information in this case will cause the loss of a fundamental right.

Bureaucratic records and the systems that hold them have a significant impact on the daily practice of our lives. Marylanders deserve a clear way to update to their birth certificates in order to prevent the serious consequences of inaccuracies in this key official document. I respectfully ask for a favorable report on S0314 -the Birth Certificate Modernization Act- from the Finance Committee.

Maryland Senate Bill 0314_Testimony - Eric Gold.pd

Uploaded by: Eric Gold

Position: FAV

MARYLAND SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE HEARING
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL [0314](#)
(Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards – Sex Designation)
(Birth Certificate Modernization Act)
February 5, 2025

Eric Gold
Partner, Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP
177 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02115
EGold@manatt.com

I previously served as an Assistant Attorney General (2012-2017) and Chief of the Health Care Division (2017-2023) for the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office. In that role, I supported efforts to enact Massachusetts Chapter 127 of the Acts of 2022, *An Act Expanding Protections for Reproductive and Gender-Affirming Care*, known as the Massachusetts Shield Law. At Manatt, I am part of a team of professionals providing pro bono consulting services to Trans Maryland.

Passage of SB 0314 will modernize Maryland's process for changing a gender marker on a birth certificate to be consistent with policies in other states across the country. At a time when transgender people's rights are under attack, Maryland can take an important step through the Birth Certificate Modernization Act (BCMA) to support transgender individuals in their everyday lives.

Maryland has long been committed to transgender rights and equality, as evidenced in the 2015 Birth Certificate Bill (Vital Records - New Certificates of Birth - Sex Change or Diagnosis of an Intersex Condition, [SB0743/CH0484](#)). That law allows individuals to obtain a new birth certificate reflecting a change in sex designation upon certification from a licensed health care practitioner or a court order, without proof of surgery. Ten years later, the BCMA would update Maryland's gender marker change rules, so they are consistent with the approaches in other states. These changes would streamline processes for transgender individuals, health care providers and the state. By streamlining the process for updating their birth certificates, the BCMA will help ensure transgender people have access to public spaces and resources, reducing the risk of discrimination for transgender people and their family.

Through passage of the BCMA, Maryland would join many other states in enacting similar policies:

Allowing the use of "X" markers on birth certificates. People may use the gender marker "X" to indicate a gender identity that is not exclusively male or female, including transgender, nonbinary or intersex status. Accurate and consistent gender markers on identification documents help these individuals navigate society with fewer barriers. Maryland Department of Transportation policy already allows individuals to designate their gender with an "X" marker. It is important that individuals have the same gender marker on their birth certificate and driver's license, because misaligned identification documents can lead to challenges for tasks that require identity verification, including access to health care and other government benefits and opening a bank account.

Along with D.C., the following sixteen states allow residents to use an "X" marker on their birth certificate: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts,

Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, Washington.¹

Eliminating requirements to have a medical certification for updates to gender marker.

States take varying approaches for how individuals can petition for updating a gender marker on a birth certificate. Some states rely on an administrative process solely (e.g., form, attestation, affidavit), while others require a health care provider's documentation of "appropriate treatment," proof of surgery, or a court order. For a minor, the parent(s) or guardian of the minor must sign a petition for the change. An administrative process that allows for an individual's own attestation of their gender is the most accurate means of determining the appropriate gender designation for their birth certificate. Under current Maryland law, to change their gender marker, a transgender individual needs a signature/certification from their medical provider. Eliminating health care provider documentation requirements would remove administrative burden both for the individual seeking the change and their health care provider.

The following fourteen states allow adults to update the gender marker on their birth certificate or their child's gender on their child's birth certificate through sworn attestations or an affidavit process without a medical certification: California, Idaho, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington.² Of those states, all except Idaho allow the use of "X" gender marker on birth certificates.

Ensuring birth certificates are not marked "amended". Issuing a new, "clean" birth certificate when an individual or their child has updated their gender marker reduces risk of the individual or child being "outed" to providers and employers, further reducing risk of discrimination. Of the states that do not require provider documentation for an individual to update their gender on their birth certificate or their child's gender on their child's birth certificate, five issue a new birth certificate, California, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, and Vermont.³

My team has conducted a scan of public records and found no publicly documented cases of individuals changing their own gender marker or that of a minor for fraudulent or criminal purposes. I see no real risk of fraud for gender marker changes. The BCMA is sound policy and will help ensure the safety and livelihood of trans Marylanders.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important legislation, and please do not hesitate to contact me if we can be of further assistance.

¹ State statutes, regulations, and policy related to updating gender markers on birth certificates:

California: Health & Safety Code, §§ 103425-445; [Form](#).

Colorado: [H.B. 19-1039](#); [5 CCR 1006-1](#); [Form](#).

Connecticut: Gen. Stat. § 7-51.

District of Columbia: [D.C. Code 20-37](#); [Form](#).

Idaho: [F.V. v. Jeppesen](#), 477 F.Supp.3d 1144 (D. Idaho 2020); [Form](#).

Illinois: [HB1785](#); [Form](#).

Maine: [LD 2235](#); Rule [10-146](#); [Form](#).

Massachusetts: Mass Gen. Laws ch. 46, § 13(e) as amended by [Sec. 77 of Chapter 140 of the Acts of 2024](#); [Form](#).

Michigan: [HB5303](#); [Form](#).

Nevada: Nev. Admin. Code. [Ch. 440, § 030](#); [Form](#).

New Jersey: N.J. Rev. Stat. [§ 26:8-40.12](#); [Form](#).

New Mexico: [SB 20](#); [Form](#).

New York: NYCRR Title 10 [Section 35.2](#); [Form](#).

Oregon: [HB 2673](#); [Form](#).

Rhode Island: R.I. Gen. Laws [§ 23-3-21](#); [Form](#).

Utah: [SB93](#).

Vermont: [18 V.S.A. § 5112](#); [Form](#).

Washington: [Form](#).

² Minors in WA require a health care provider attestation. See [Request to Change Sex Designation on Birth Certificate for a Minor](#).

³ See [Transgender Birth Certificates by State](#).

EzraTowne_SB0314_Favorable_2025_0203_Finance.pdf

Uploaded by: Ezra Towne

Position: FAV

**Testimony Favorable to SB0314:
Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation
(Birth Certificate Modernization Act)**

February 3, 2025

Senator Pamela Beidle, Chair, Senator Antonio Hayes, Vice-Chair, and esteemed members of the Finance Committee:

My name is Ezra Towne, and my pronouns are they/them. My testimony today is very personal in nature, and it's incredibly important to me that I share my story with you. I am an out transmasculine, non-binary person, an advocate and leader in my local trans community, a spouse, and a proud parent of two children (ages 12 and 17). **I fully support SB0314 - and ask for a favorable report without amendments.**

I wasn't always named Ezra, and before adding children to our family, I didn't really mind the cognitive dissonance and accompanying need to write a different name on my legal documents. But when it came time to enroll my oldest child in school, the dysphoria of having a name I was known by and a legal name that didn't match became intolerable - and I legally changed my name in 2015.

But changing my name did not solve the problem of the name shown on my children's birth certificates - one of the primary proofs of identity in legal matters. As such, my children have incorrect identity documents - with what looks like someone else as their parent. Each time I need to provide their birth certificates as evidence of my parenthood, I have to bring along my name change paperwork.

Not only is it woefully inconvenient to tote extra papers around, it is extremely distressing. Ezra is my name, and it feels like it has always been my name. It is unfair and discriminatory towards me, and others who are trans and/or non-binary - no one who gets married and changes their name has to prove their parenthood in the same way.

Currently there is no clear path for trans and nonbinary Marylanders to update their own names on their children's birth certificates. SB0314 would change that.

SB0314 would make it possible for transgender and/or non-binary parents (like me) to correct their children's birth certificates after they have been granted an order of legal

name change through the Maryland Courts. It also clarifies that an X marker is permitted on Maryland certificates of birth, and ensures existing birth certificates issued by Maryland Department of Vital Statistics remain valid.

I believe that the people of Maryland, the free state, want to do better for trans and non-binary Marylanders. **I respectfully ask for a favorable report on S0314 - the Birth Certificate Modernization Act - from the Health and Government Operations Committee.**

Sincerely,
Mx. Ezra Towne
District 18, Wheaton

Favorable, SB0314.pdf

Uploaded by: Felicity Prince

Position: FAV

Senate Bill 314 (SB314): Birth Certificate Modernization Act written testimony

Felicity Prince
350 Rosebank Ave Baltimore MD 21212
District 41

TESTIMONY Favorable: **Senate Bill 314 (SB314): Birth Certificate Modernization Act**

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB0314 - Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

Date of Hearing: Wednesday 2/5, 2p

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

Members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Felicity Prince, resident of Maryland, and I am writing to support SB314, Birth Certificate Modernization Act. I serve our community by providing fair and equitable healthcare rates. My company Kaiser Permanente is also dedicated to providing high quality healthcare to everyone including our LGBTQ+ community.

The proposed Birth Certificate Modernization Act would streamline procedures for amending sex on birth certificates, licenses and IDs, and introducing a gender-neutral designation option. We want to support our transgender community and ease the administrative burden with uniformed agencies.

SB314 is important because it will increase safety, health, and wellness for transgender people and their families, all of whom rely on an accurate birth certificate for many vital functions including but not limited to: obtaining health or life insurance coverage, obtaining a U.S. passport, enrolling in school, parents or guardians ability to obtain for their children medical or behavioral health care services.

I urge you to support SB314 lifesaving legislation to expand access to healthcare for transgender Marylanders.

Sincerely,

Felicity Prince

Felicity.prince@yahoo.com

SB314_LOS_HH.pdf

Uploaded by: Helene Hedian

Position: FAV

TO: The Honorable Pam Beidle, Chair
Finance Committee

FROM: Helene F. Hedian, MD

SB314
Favorable

DATE: February 3, 2025

RE: SB314 – Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards – Sex Designation

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of the Birth Certificate Modernization Act (**SB 314**).

I am an internal medicine physician at Johns Hopkins who has personally cared for hundreds of transgender and nonbinary patients in the Baltimore region and beyond. The views expressed in this letter are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of the institution.

SB314 would directly help my patients in several ways:

1. As you know, many transgender and nonbinary people change their legal name during the course of pursuing gender affirmation. For those who are parents, SB 314 would allow amendment of their children's birth certificates to reflect their own (the parents') current legal name. Without this, it is challenging for transgender parents to legally prove that they are related to their own children.
2. In addition, transgender and nonbinary people may change their legal gender marker on identification documents such as a Maryland driver's license, and they may seek to amend the gender marker on their birth certificate, to ensure that all of their administrative documentation is in agreement. SB 314 would allow transgender people to self-identify the gender to be placed on their amended birth certificate, removing an outdated requirement for attestation by a medical professional. This self-attestation will be made under penalty of perjury, ensuring that this process is not undertaken lightly. This change would bring Maryland into alignment with the 14 other states which already allow self-identification of gender identity on birth certificates: California, Idaho, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington state.
3. It clarifies that the X gender marker – which is already an option for Maryland state identification cards – is also valid for Maryland birth certificates. Maryland would join the ranks of 16 other states and DC which currently allow the X gender marker identification on birth certificates: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, Washington state, and Washington DC.

Passing this bill will significantly ease the burden of accessing accurate administrative documents for the transgender and nonbinary community. In addition, it honors the dignity and right to privacy for this community. I urge you to issue a **favorable** report on the Birth Certificate Modernization Act (**SB 314**).

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Best Regards,



Helene F. Hedian, MD

Favorable SB0314.pdf

Uploaded by: Jennifer Kreger

Position: FAV

Senate Bill 314 (SB314): Birth Certificate Modernization Act written testimony

Jennifer Kreger
314 Taplow Rd Baltimore MD 21212
District 41

TESTIMONY Favorable: **Senate Bill 314 (SB314): Birth Certificate Modernization Act**

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB0314 - Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

Date of Hearing: Wednesday 2/5, 2p

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

Members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Jennifer Kreger, resident of Baltimore City, Maryland, and I am writing in support of SB314, Birth Certificate Modernization Act.

As a member of this community, I stand in solidarity with friends, families and loved ones who are directly impacted by the current barriers to updating birth certificates for transgender and non-binary individuals. Unfortunately for trans people, outdated birth certificate policies create unnecessary hardships, and this legislation would help to remove barriers and ensure that everyone can have accurate documentation to reflect who they are. The proposed Birth Certificate Modernization Act would streamline procedures for amending sex on birth certificates, licenses and IDs, and introducing a gender-neutral designation option. We want to support our transgender community and ease the administrative burden with uniformed agencies.

I have seen firsthand the challenges faced by community members who identify as transgender. They often face emotional and logistical hurdles when navigating a system that refuses to recognize their identity. For many, an accurate birth certificate is a fundamental step toward safety and well-being.

SB314 is a matter of public health and safety. By making it easier for transgender people to update their documents, we can reduce the risk of discrimination, foster a more inclusive environment, and contribute to the overall mental and physical well-being of trans individuals.

I ask you to support the SB314 lifesaving legislation as a crucial step toward making Maryland a safer and more equitable place for all Marylanders.

Sincerely,

Jennifer

Testimony SB0314.pdf

Uploaded by: Jennifer Zwarich

Position: FAV



February 3, 2025

Subject: Testimony in Support of the Birth Certificate Modernization Act SB0314

To the Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Birth Certificate Modernization Act. As a licensed clinical social worker in private practice in Ellicott City, specializing in work with adolescents and adults within the LGBTQIA+ community, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges posed by the current birth certificate process. My experience, both professionally and personally as a cisgender queer parent, has made it clear that this legislation is crucial for the well-being of many Marylanders.

For the past three years, I have been an advocate with CARY (Community Allies for Rainbow Youth) and it is through their legislative advocacy branch that I became aware of this bill. In my private practice, I have assisted numerous clients with the birth certificate name and gender marker change process. I have seen the significant hurdles that transgender and non-binary individuals face in navigating this system.

The current inconsistencies in gender marker policies across Maryland agencies create unnecessary complications for transgender parents. Fourteen states already recognize the self-identification of gender on birth certificates, a model that Maryland should emulate. The Birth Certificate Modernization Act would significantly simplify life transitions—including marriage, parenthood, and name changes—for countless Marylanders.

For individuals experiencing stress, anxiety, trauma, or depression, even seemingly simple administrative tasks can become overwhelming. The added stress of the name and gender marker process can create additional barriers to well-being. When individuals are struggling with mental health challenges, tasks that are not immediately survival-focused often get postponed, leading to further complications and feelings of invalidation every time they are required to complete a form that requires their legal name or gender marker.

Passing the Birth Certificate Modernization Act is not simply a matter of administrative efficiency; it is a matter of dignity, respect, and mental health. It will ease the burden on transgender and non-binary individuals and families, allowing them to focus on their lives and well-being. I urge you to vote in favor of this vital legislation.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Zwarich, LCSW-C

CARY Member

FAV SB0314 Birth Certificate Modernization Act.pdf

Uploaded by: Jeremy Browning

Position: FAV



**Maryland Commission
on LGBTQIA+ Affairs**

Bill Title: Birth Certificate Modernization Act
Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation
(Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

Bill Number(s): [SB0314](#)

Position: FAVORABLE

Date: February 3, 2025

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

To:

Senate Finance Committee

The Hon. Pamela 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.

On behalf of the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs, we strongly support Senate Bill 314, the Birth Certificate Modernization Act. This bill is a top priority for the Commission and represents a crucial step toward ensuring dignity, equity, and inclusion for transgender, nonbinary, and intersex individuals in Maryland.

This bill addresses long-standing barriers by streamlining processes for amending sex designations on birth certificates, licenses, and identification cards. It removes medically unnecessary and burdensome requirements, such as proof of surgery or other medical interventions, that many individuals cannot access or do not want. Further, this documentation is time intensive for providers within an already-overburdened health system. By simplifying this process, the bill affirms an individual's right to self-determine their identity, in alignment with best practices recommended by medical and advocacy organizations nationwide.

Senate Bill 314 also introduces an option to list "X" for sex designations, which is vital for Marylanders who do not identify within the traditional binary framework. This inclusion aligns

with Maryland's commitment to equity and reflects the state's role as a leader in progressive, inclusive policy-making. Maryland would join 16 states and Washington, D.C. who allow residents to list "X" on their birth certificate.

Beyond the procedural benefits, this legislation sends a powerful message to LGBTQIA+ Marylanders, particularly parents and youth, that their identities are valid and that they belong in this state. The mental health and well-being of LGBTQIA+ individuals are directly impacted by the degree to which they feel seen, respected, and supported. Removing systemic barriers to accurate identity documents significantly reduces stress and stigma, fostering a safer and more equitable Maryland.

The Commission applauds Senators Lam and Waldstreicher for introducing this bill and the committee for its commitment to considering legislation that upholds the rights and dignity of all Marylanders. We respectfully urge a favorable report for Senate Bill 314.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 361 – Birth Certificate

Uploaded by: Jess Romeo

Position: FAV

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 361 – Birth Certificate Modernization Act

February 3, 2025

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

I write today in strong support of HB 361, the Birth Certificate Modernization Act, which will bring Maryland's birth certificate policies in line with the procedures for other documents, ensuring all Marylanders can access accurate, affirming identity documents without unnecessary administrative barriers.

As a psychiatric nurse practitioner, I regularly work with transgender and nonbinary clients navigating systems that were not built with them in mind. Birth certificates are foundational documents that impact access to healthcare, employment, housing, and even parental rights. When identity documents fail to reflect a person's lived reality, it forces them to repeatedly disclose private information, exposing them to discrimination, undue scrutiny, and legal complications. Additionally, since no other ID documents in Maryland require a medical provider's verification to self-attest gender, it is unreasonable for this document to continue requiring such involvement.

Maryland already allows self-selection of gender markers on driver's licenses and state IDs, yet birth certificate policies remain inconsistent. HB 361 will:

- Allow transgender parents to prove their legal relationship to their children after a name change.
- Clarify that an "X" gender marker is a valid option, aligning Maryland with 16 states and Washington, D.C.
- Reduce administrative burdens for transgender individuals, particularly those with limited financial resources or without an affirming medical provider.

This bill is a matter of privacy, safety, and dignity. Having accurate identity documents is not just about personal affirmation—it's about ensuring that transgender Marylanders are recognized equally under the law, without barriers that cisgender individuals do not face. In the political climate we are living in, this act also serves to protect Marylanders from the rapidly changing vicissitudes of a

hostile federal administration. It's more important than ever that our values are clearly reflected in state laws.

Importantly, this bill does not alter medical standards of care, impact school sports participation, or change policies for incarcerated individuals. It simply provides a pathway for Marylanders to access birth certificates that reflect who they are.

Passing HB 361 means removing bureaucratic barriers that create unnecessary harm. I urge the committee to vote in favor of HB 361 to ensure Maryland's policies reflect the needs and realities of all its residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Jess Romeo, PMHNP-BC

HTPP SB 314 HTPP Testimony (FAV).pdf

Uploaded by: Jessica Emerson

Position: FAV

Testimony of the Human Trafficking Prevention Project

BILL NO: Senate Bill 314
TITLE: Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards – Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)
COMMITTEE: Health & Government Operations
HEARING DATE: February 6, 2025
POSITION: **FAVORABLE**

Senate Bill 314 would bring gender marker policies at the Maryland Department of Health Vital Statistics Administration in line with those issued by other state agencies, easing the administrative burden for those Marylanders seeking to access a new birth certificate in the state. The Human Trafficking Prevention Project supports this bill because it will make it easier for transgender and gender non-conforming people to obtain identity documents that match their gender identity. This small change will greatly reduce the stigma they face, which, in turn, reduces their risk of being trafficked.

Efforts at raising public awareness about the crime of human trafficking commonly ignores the impact that gender identity has on a person's vulnerability to trafficking. The reality is that [transgender and gender non-conforming persons are put at disproportionately higher risk of exploitation](#) because of the discrimination and isolation that they so often face, which commonly translates into the hallmarks of heightened trafficking risk including sexual assault, financial instability, homelessness, and drug addiction. One of the primary forms of discrimination that transgender and gender non-conforming people face is the consequences that come with showing identification carrying a gender marker that does not match the person's lived gender experience.

Having to produce this type of identification essentially "outs" a transgender or gender non-conforming person in any situation where they need to show their identification, such as while traveling, applying for jobs or educational opportunities, entering certain public establishments, or obtaining benefits that require proof of identity. As detailed in chapter six of the [Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey](#), this can further expose trans- and gender non-conforming people to a variety of problematic and often dangerous outcomes, such as unnecessary scrutiny by law enforcement, denial of housing, employment, healthcare or public benefits, verbal harassment, and physical violence. Experiences like these typically drive affected individuals into isolation, which is why so many people transgender and gender non-conforming people exist on the margins of society where they face a far greater risk of exploitation.

In recent years, Maryland has begun to show its support for *preventing* human trafficking by addressing the societal challenges that make Marylanders more vulnerable to being trafficked. SB 314 would further this goal by reducing the stigma that transgender and gender non-

conforming persons face every time they are asked to produce their identification documents, which would, in turn, affirm the humanity of these individuals and make them less vulnerable to the ills that so commonly precede a trafficking experience. **For these reasons, the Human Trafficking Prevention Project supports Senate Bill 314, and respectfully urges a favorable report.**

[The Human Trafficking Prevention Project](#) is dedicated to ending the criminalization of sex workers and survivors of human trafficking through access to civil legal services and support for policies that dismantle harmful systems and increase access to basic human rights and legal relief.

*For more information, please contact:
Jessica Emerson, LMSW, Esq.
jemerson@htprevention.org*

MLAW Testimony - SB314 - Certificates of Birth, Li

Uploaded by: Jessica Morgan

Position: FAV



Bill No: SB314
Title: Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)
Committee: Finance
Hearing: February 5, 2025
Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) is a statewide coalition of women's groups and individuals formed to provide a non-partisan, independent voice for Maryland women and families. MLAW's purpose is to advocate for legislation affecting women and families. To accomplish this goal, MLAW creates an annual legislative agenda with issues voted on by MLAW members and endorsed by organizations and individuals from all over Maryland. **SB314 - Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)** is a priority on the [2025 MLAW Agenda](#) and we urge your support.

SB314 will update the process for changing one's personal name or sex designation on their own birth certificate or their child's birth certificate to align with other identification processes, promote dignity for all unique identities, and reduce opportunities for discrimination.

Currently there is no official process for changing the name or gender marker on your own birth certificate or your child's birth certificate in Maryland. In addition, our current system limits sex designation on a birth certificate to male or female and requires documentation from a physician to change it. While the Maryland ID and the U.S. passport have updated their processes to be more inclusive, the MD birth certificate lags behind which interrupts consistency among legal identification documents. This creates undue barriers for the trans and nonbinary community, including trans women, and prevents them from receiving official documents that affirm their current gender expression and identity. Consequently, members of these communities, and their children, are forcibly outed. Participating in common activities such as enrolling a child in school, traveling, or opening a bank account can expose individuals to discrimination and any consequences that may follow. We know that transgender and nonbinary folk are victimized at higher rates than their cisgendered counterparts. By having their identities haphazardly revealed trans/nonbinary folks and their families' risk violent encounters and dangerous repercussions.

The Birth Certificate Modernization Act will align the procedure for updating one's name or gender marker with the existing procedure for all other identification documents. Individuals will now be permitted to request a sex designation or name change under penalty of perjury rather than requiring a medical intervention. In addition, individuals will be provided three additional sex designations: nonbinary, other, or unspecified. This inclusion allows identity documents to better capture and validate the unique gender experience of all people. Lastly, this bill ensures that properly requested changes result in the creation of a new, rather than amended, birth certificate. An amended birth certificate still highlights the changes made which still infringes an individual's right to privacy and exposes them to prejudice. Dictating that these approved changes result in a new birth certificate is consistent with the ultimate goal of legislation—to provide all people, including transwomen, the right to dignity and privacy.

For these reasons, MLAW strongly urges the passage of SB314.

MLAW 2025 Supporting Organizations

The following organizations have signed on in support of our 2025 Legislative Agenda:

1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East
AAUW Anne Arundel County
AAUW Garrett Branch
AAUW Howard County
AAUW Kensington-Rockville Branch
AAUW Maryland
Anne Arundel County NOW
Bound for Better, advocates for Domestic Violence
Calvert County Democratic Womens' Club
Charles County Commission for Womrn
Child Justice, Inc.
City of College Park MD
Court Watch Montgomery
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority North Arundel County Alumnae Chapter
FinnCORE, Inc.
Frederick County Commission for Women
Interfaith Action for Human Rights
Kids for Saving Earth
Maryland Chapter, National Organization for Women
Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence
Montgomery County, MD, NOW
National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc., Anne Arundel County Chapter
NCBWSOMD
ShareBaby, Inc.
Stella's Girls Incorporated
SUB&S LLC
The Rebuild, Overcome, and Rise (ROAR) Center of UMB
Trans Maryland
Unrooted Culture
Women of Honor International
Women's Equality Day Celebration across Maryland Coalition
Women's Equity Center and Action Network (WE CAN)
Women's Law Center of Maryland

*signed on as of 1/26/2025

Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women

102 W. Pennsylvania Avenue, Suite 100 • Towson, MD 21204 • 443-519-1005 phone/fax
mdlegagenda4women@yahoo.com • www.mdlegagendaforwomen.org

SB314 One Pasadena 2025.pdf

Uploaded by: John Jasen

Position: FAV

Senate Bill 314 - Finance Committee - FAVORABLE

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Finance Committee;

One Pasadena: Building a Safe and Inclusive Community is a group of people who are dedicated to countering bigotry in Pasadena, Maryland. We, the Steering Committee of One Pasadena, ask that you vote in favor of Senate Bill 314, the Birth Certificate Modernization Act.

We are worried about our transgender family, friends, and neighbors. It's already very difficult to be openly transgender in Pasadena, where many community members have harassed, threatened, and even physically attacked trans people (including students.) We ask that you make things just a little bit easier for the members of our community who are just trying to live their authentic selves.

Not everyone has a stable living environment, much less enough money to jump through the hoops required by medical personnel - if they can find transportation to appointments in the first place. With insurance often tied to parents who far too often reject their Queer children in our area, and now with the government threatening to block medical coverage for gender-affirming care, costs would have to be paid out-of-pocket for many.

Please protect our transgender Marylanders to the best of your ability this session. Voting in favor of Senate Bill 314 is one step towards doing so. Thank you.

Sincerely,

The One Pasadena Steering Committee
Pasadena, MD

Senate Testimony - Birth Certificate Modernization

Uploaded by: Kate Stewart

Position: FAV



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

KATE STEWART
PRESIDENT
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

February 5, 2025

TO: The Honorable Senator Pamela Beidle
Chair, Finance Committee

FROM: Kate Stewart
Montgomery County Councilmember, District 4

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

My name is Kate Stewart and I serve as the Montgomery County Councilmember for District 4 and as the President of the Montgomery County Council. Today, I am speaking on behalf of myself in support of **Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation, the Birth Certificate Modernization Act (Senate Bill 314)**.

This legislation would clarify that an “X” marker is permitted on Maryland certificates of birth, enable transgender parents to prove they are related to their own children after they have been granted an order of legal name change through the Maryland Courts, ensure the validity of existing birth certificates, ease the administrative burden of accessing accurate documents for the transgender community, and require attestation of gender on birth certificates to be made under penalty of perjury.

Given the current national political climate and the new federal administration, legislation such as this is essential to pass at the state level to protect members of our LGBTQ+ community, especially transgender and gender nonconforming individuals. The federal administration has brought forth numerous executive orders targeting these communities, including prohibiting transgender individuals from serving openly in the military, restricting young people from accessing gender-affirming care, and keeping teachers from treating students with respect and dignity, denying the reality of these students’ lives and causing immeasurable suffering. Senate

Bill 314 will aid in solidifying these students' and other individuals' lived experiences and personal dignity by ensuring their legal documents properly reflect their gender identity.

The executive orders on the federal level and similar laws in other states are directed attacks on valued members of our community. We cannot let our transgender and gender nonconforming neighbors stand alone in the face of such uncertainty on the federal level. I urge you to support this bill to preserve the dignity and humanity each individual has a right to in their own identity.

SB314_KellenSweeney_favorable.pdf

Uploaded by: Kellen Sweeney

Position: FAV

SB 314 SUPPORT

Kellen Sweeney
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(240) 274-8119
206 Saint Dunstons Rd
Baltimore, MD 21212
MD Legislative District 41

SB 314 SUPPORT

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

Senate Committees on Finance and Judicial Proceedings
Wednesday, February 5, 2025 at 2:00pm

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Senate Finance and Judicial Proceedings Committees,

My name is Kellen Sweeney. I live in Baltimore City with my husband and four-year-old child. I work as a health policy consultant to the federal government. In 2022, I filed to legally change my name to reflect my transgender nonbinary identity. **I am in support of Senate Bill 314.**

All Marylanders should have access to accurate government-issued identification documents. These are used in countless financial, health care, benefits, and other transactions. As a parent, I regularly need to produce documents proving my own identity and my relationship to my child.

Government-issued identification works differently for me simply because I am transgender. Because I legally changed my name after giving birth to my child, the name on my driver's license did not match the name on my child's birth certificate, meaning I could not use their birth certificate alone to prove my parentage for official purposes like applying for their passport.

There is no clear process for remediating the situation. I could not find guidance on the state Division of Vital Records website for how to correct the name of a parent due to a name change; I tried to make an appointment, but it was not clear which type of appointment I needed to request. I did not trust I would be able to complete this process by mail, given the lack of clarity, so I just picked an appointment type, took a day off of work, and hoped that whoever I end up talking to in person would be willing to find a creative solution to navigate this scenario. On my first attempt, they were not. I went home, made a different appointment type for another day, took ANOTHER day off of work, and was able to complete the process on my second attempt.

Accessing core government services like accurate identification documents should not be left to individual staff discretion and should not require taking multiple days off of work for a basic update for which I had all of the requisite legal documentation, including a valid court order.

By contrast, my ability to obtain an accurate driver's license was simple. The MVA website clearly indicated that the option was available, how to make the appropriate appointment, and what documentation I needed to bring. The MVA staff were trained on the process, the systems were updated to collect and update the information for this scenario – it worked the way a common government service should. I could do it on my lunch break. This is because the General Assembly passed legislation to make those expectations clear to the agency.

You may wonder whether legislation is really required to do this, or if it could be accomplished through subregulatory guidance. **I would not have been able to update my marriage certificate were it not for legislation passed by the General Assembly in 2022 (HB 369 / SB 377).** Despite the fact that this legislation had been passed, and the Maryland Judiciary had posted a form on their website to serve as affidavit required to request a name change, the staff in the Baltimore City courthouse simply refused to accept the documentation. I produced my court order, my other updated legal identification documents, and even a copy of the legislation. I spent hours at the courthouse over four different days. I was sent on a wild goose chase to the Civil division, Family division, even the magistrate's office. They simply refused to do it. Finally, I contacted the Attorney General's office asking what was their plan to comply with the statute. I got a call back within the hour, and my marriage license was updated the next day – because the General Assembly had made it clear that this was the law.

I wish it was not necessary to pass legislation to ensure that everyone would honor a court ordered name change. I wish we didn't live in a time where individual bureaucrats could decide they simply don't think another person should be able to change their name or gender and put those beliefs over the needs of the individuals they are meant to serve. But unfortunately, we live in a time where this issue has been made into a manufactured controversy, and I am simply caught in the crossfire. We not only need to protect the civil rights of transgender people in generalities and nondiscrimination policies, we need to protect those rights specifically and in detail to ensure that the intent of those civil rights protections are executed every time.

It's no secret we live in a time that is very difficult for transgender people. A few years from now, I hope you are able to look back on this time and believe that you did everything you could to ensure we are treated the same as any other Marylander. **The Senate should pass SB 314. Transgender Marylanders and their families deserve the same access to accurate government-issued identification as any other Marylanders.**

sb 314 2025 change birth certificate.pdf

Uploaded by: Ken Phelps Jr

Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF SB0314:
Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards –
Sex Designation 3 (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)
FAVORABLE**

TO: Senator William C. Smith, Chair, Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair and the members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee; and Senator Pamela Beidle, Chair, Senator Antonion Hayes, Vice Chair and the members of the Finance Committee

FROM: Rev. Linda K. Boyd, Co-Chair, Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network, Diocese of Maryland

DATE: February 5, 2025

This bill allows transgender people to change to modify their birth certificates to reflect their gender identity without an affidavit from a healthcare provider. Thus, this bill promotes accurate identity documentation for transgender individuals, reducing discrimination and harassment, facilitating access to services, upholding personal autonomy, and recognizing the reality of gender identity as distinct from sex assigned at birth. This would allow a birth certificate to align with a person's lived gender which is crucial for their well-being and legal standing in society.

Amending the sex designation on a birth certificate may be an extremely important step for a transgender person, to accurately reflect on this legal document the sex with which the individual identifies, and as required proof of sex to obtain other identity and legal documents.

We respectfully request a favorable report.

SB314_LammotduPont_favorable.pdf

Uploaded by: Lammot duPont

Position: FAV

SB 314 SUPPORT

Lammot du Pont
ellen.sweeney@gmail.com
(703) 862-2438
206 Saint Dunstons Rd
Baltimore, MD 21212
MD Legislative District: 41

SB 314 SUPPORT**Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex
Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)**

House of Delegates Committee on Health and Government Operations
Wednesday, February 5, 2025 at 2:00pm

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Senate Finance and Judicial Proceedings Committees,

My name is Lammot du Pont. I live in Baltimore City with my spouse and our four-year-old son. I am in support of Senate Bill 314.

All Marylanders should have access to accurate, government-issued identification documents that are used in countless financial, health care, benefits, and other transactions on a daily basis. The current process makes it difficult, if not impossible, for individuals to correct and/or update important information regarding their name and gender identification. Without clear guidance, accessing core government services like accurate identification documents will be left to individual staff discretion and create confusion and delays for applicants trying to navigate the process.

The Maryland General Assembly should pass SB 314 to clarify the expectations regarding updating birth certificates to accurately reflect a parent's legal name change and gender identification. Transgender Marylanders and their families deserve the same access to accurate, government-issued identification as every Marylander.

SB0314 Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identi

Uploaded by: Lauren Pollak

Position: FAV

Lauren Schoene Pollak
6 Upland Road, Apt K3
Baltimore, MD 21210
District 41

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB0314 Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification
Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

2/3/2025

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

FROM: Lauren Pollak

Hello,

I am writing to express my support for SB0215, the Birth Certificate Modernization Act. While I am a cis-woman, I have close friends who identify as trans and/or non-binary and they have the right to update their child(ren)'s birth certificates so that their name and/or gender identify is accurate. I am a mother myself, as are many of my friends, and they are excellent parents who should have their names and the title Mother or Father correctly listed on their child(ren)'s birth certificates.

My friend is transitioning, and they changed their name and gender identify after giving birth and breastfeeding. They now would like to update their child's birth certificate to reflect their transition and new identity, but have been unable to due to the convoluted process in place currently. Please consider this bill as it has a lot of support behind it and would improve the lives and wellbeing of your constituents.

Respectfully,
Lauren Schoene Pollak, M.S.

SB314_LGBTQ+Caucus_FAV

Uploaded by: LGBTQ+ Caucus

Position: FAV



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Senator Craig Zucker

LETTER OF SUPPORT HOUSE BILL 1368 & SENATE BILL 314

February 18, 2025

Chair Peña-Melnyk and Chair Beidle:

On behalf of the LGBTQ+ Caucus, we are writing to express our support of **HB1368/SB314: Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)**. As advocates and stewards of the LGBTQ+ community, we believe this bill will protect, strengthen, and secure LGBTQ+ rights for all LGBTQ+ residents. The benefits and effects of passing the proposed legislation will create a positive and long-lasting change for all of Maryland.

HB1368/SB314 seeks to alter the circumstances under which the Secretary of Health is required to make a new certificate of birth due to the change of the sex designation of an individual. It also requires the Motor Vehicle Administration to comply with altering the sex designation on a license and/or identification card that it issues. This bill is relevant to the LGBTQ+ community because it ensures that individuals' gender identities are accurately reflected on official documents, reducing discrimination and barriers to accessing essential services.

Thank you for your consideration of the bill and its positive effects on the LGBTQ+ community. Please reach out to us regarding any additional questions or concerns on the bill. We appreciate your efforts in fostering community and furthering rights for all Marylanders.

Respectfully,

Delegate Kris Fair
Chair

SB0314 Support_Harbin.pdf

Uploaded by: Lisa Harbin

Position: FAV

SB 0314 – Favorable – Finance and Judicial Proceedings Committees

Lisa Harbin
1215 W, 40th St., Baltimore, MD 21211
District 40

TESTIMONY IN **SUPPORT** OF **SB0314** - Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

Hearing Date: February 5, 2025

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

Senators Beidle and Smith and members of the Finance and Judicial Proceedings Committees, my name is Lisa Harbin and I live in Baltimore, Maryland. I am writing to support SB 0314, the Birth Certificate Modernization Act.

In light of the current U.S. administration's attacks on trans and non-binary individuals, we in Maryland must do whatever we can to protect the rights of everyone in our state. SB 0314 will allow Maryland parents who have changed their name or gender to update their child's birth certificate to reflect those changes. Currently, if a parent changes their name or gender on their driver's license or passport, they can't update their child's birth certificate to match. Discrepancies in a parent's identity in legal documents can impact their parental rights if they are called into question (for example, during divorce proceedings).

I have family members and beloved friends who are trans and non-binary, and fortunately, several of them are also Maryland citizens. You can fortify my loved ones' rights and the rights of all Marylanders by passing SB 0314.

Please support SB 0314 and help keep Maryland families secure.

Sincerely,

Lisa Harbin

CLS Support for SB0314 - Birth Cert Mod Act .pdf

Uploaded by: Lisa Sarro

Position: FAV



Jessica A. Quincosa, Esq.
Executive Director

Kayla Williams-Campbell, Esq.
Deputy Director

Lisa Sarro, Esq.
**Director of Litigation
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SB0314

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

**Finance Committee Hearing
February 5, 2025**

Position: FAVORABLE

To the Honorable Members of the Finance Committee:

Community Legal Services (CLS) is a nonprofit legal services provider dedicated to ensuring equitable access to justice and due process of law for Maryland's most under-represented populations. We strive to support, protect and advocate for the human rights of all individuals and families. We strongly support passage of SB0314.

Maryland must step up to protect Marylanders whose rights and well-being are under attack at the federal level. This bill is an important step toward fulfilling this responsibility by protecting the rights, dignity, and wellbeing of nonbinary and transgender individuals in Maryland. Transgender and nonbinary individuals face significant barriers to full inclusion and equal treatment in society. One of the most critical issues is the mismatch between their legal documents—such as birth certificates, licenses and identification cards—and their gender identity. This bill helps address this issue.

A birth certificate that does not reflect an individual's true gender can create obstacles in numerous aspects of life, including healthcare, employment, and safety. Ensuring that nonbinary and transgender Marylanders may update birth certificates, IDs and licenses to reflect their gender identity is not just enabling a legal change—it is also a vital affirmation of their right to self-determination and their right to define themselves. The provision in this bill which prohibits updated birth certificates from reflecting that they were reissued or amended is critical to preserve privacy and prevent discrimination when individuals use their updated birth certificate for identification or when applying for jobs, a passport, or other uses.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report in SB0314 to advance this important legislation.

Please feel free to reach out to Jessica Quincosa, Executive Director, or Lisa Sarro, Director of Litigation & Advocacy, with any questions at quincosa@clspgc.org, and sarro@clspgc.org, respectively.

SB0314_Birth Certificate Modernization_FAVORABLE.p

Uploaded by: Liz Enagonio

Position: FAV



Indivisible: Central Maryland

Susan Radke, Lead Advocate

Dsusan56@gmail.com

Liz Enagonio, Lead Advocate

lenagonio@icloud.com

TESTIMONY FOR SB0314

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

Bill Sponsor: Senators Waldstreicher and Lam

Committee: Finance

Organization Submitting: Indivisible Central Maryland

Person Submitting: Liz Enagonio and Susan Radke, lead advocates

Position: FAVORABLE

Our names are Liz Enagonio and Susan Radke, lead advocates for Indivisible Central Maryland, a grassroots organization of constituents dedicated to protecting progressive and democratic values. Indivisible Central Maryland **strongly supports SB0314**.

In the current global environment, with its need for accuracy and consistency in identifying individuals in a range of areas, including financial, travel, and government interactions, the need for a birth certificate that matches the current person is sorely needed. In an era in which changing one's sex/gender is available and reasonably common, a birth certificate of the wrong gender creates barriers to consistent identification for individuals who have undergone a gender reassignment. As a now-retired hospital provider, one of us (Enagonio) witnessed this when medical records based on a no-longer accurate birth certificate conflicted with the name and gender of a patient. As a result, records became splintered, patients were wrongly identified, which could lead to grave healthcare errors, and patients were not accorded the respect of their present identity. For consistent identification in the modern world, **Indivisible Central Maryland STRONGLY supports SB0314, and recommends a FAVORABLE vote in committee.** Thank you.

SB0314 - Birth Certificate Modernization Act - Wri

Uploaded by: M Pease

Position: FAV



M Pease, M.S.
(they/them)
Research Director
info@transmaryland.org

Wednesday February 5, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Testimony of Trans Maryland – Research Unit

IN SUPPORT OF

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

To the Chair, Vice Chair, and esteemed members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Trans Maryland is a multi-racial, multi-gender community power building organization for Maryland's trans community. Trans Maryland runs the state's largest name and gender marker change program and, since 2021, has collaborated with a team of researchers supported by funding from the University System of Maryland Wilson H. Elkins Professorship on a state-wide assessment of trans community experiences. Our new [report on identity documents](#) found:

- Only **14.4%** of trans Marylanders had their correct gender on all IDs
- Individuals making **\$35,000 or less** annually and individuals with **disabilities** were significantly less likely to have their gender reflected on their ID documents
- With Maryland driver's licenses and state IDs, respondents with X gender markers **felt significantly safer** after changing their marker to X

Our data highlight the importance of making accurate identity documents with X gender markers accessible to trans people in Maryland. Key provisions of the Birth Certificate Modernization Act include replacing the requirement for a medical provider letter with an individual's statement under penalty of perjury and clarifying that the Department of Health can issue birth certificates with X sex designations. It also ensures that parents of trans youth and parents who have changed their name for any reason can obtain accurate birth certificates for their children. This streamlines processes and removes unnecessary barriers faced by trans people in Maryland, particularly those with lower incomes and with disabilities, to obtaining accurate documentation.

Accurate identity documents are critical for so many areas of everyday life. These simple changes will help ensure more trans Marylanders can access documents that match who they are, with measurable impacts on safety and wellbeing for communities across our State. For these reasons, we urge a **favorable report** on SB 314.

SB 314 - MDH - FIN - LOS.pdf

Uploaded by: Meghan Lynch

Position: FAV



Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

February 5, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

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

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) respectfully submits this letter of support for Senate Bill (SB) 314 - Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act), which supports the Moore-Miller administration's pursuit of an inclusive Maryland.

The purpose of this bill is to allow Marylanders to amend birth certificates without undue burden and to add a third sex designation option. Individuals can self-select "Unspecified or Another" in addition to male or female, which would display as "X" on the newly-issued certificate. The bill would require an individual to submit either a court order or an attestation under penalty of perjury to change the sex designation. It would further allow parents to update their child's birth certificates with their own current legal name. These changes align with Maryland Department of Transportation processes, and comport with other states' laws including the District of Columbia.

The Department's Division of Vital Records (DVR) issues certified copies of birth, death, fetal death, and marriage certificates, as well as divorce verifications, to thousands of Marylanders annually. Vital records data is essential for public health reporting and tracking progress towards health goals. This bill helps to ensure that all Marylanders are represented in these vital documents.

Upon bill passage, DVR will update the fields on birth certificate applications and the Electronic Birth Registration System (EBRS), as well as internal procedures, by the bill's implementation date of October 1, 2025.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary

Melissa Ferguson - Testimony Favorable to SB0314.p

Uploaded by: Melissa Ferguson

Position: FAV

Testimony Favorable to SB0314: Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

February 5, 2025

Senator Pamela Beidle, Chair, Senator Antonio Hayes, Vice-Chair, and esteemed members of the Finance Committee:

I live in Montgomery County, I'm a parent, and my career is in health and human services. I am keenly aware of the importance of possessing accurate official documents for accessing services and exerting our rights as citizens. I believe it is discriminatory and unfair to hinder people from correcting their government documentation to match their identity, and therefore I strongly support SB0314. I am seeking your committee's favorable report without amendments.

Throughout our lives, we use our birth certificates for milestones. Birth certificate inaccuracies can create bureaucratic tangles and even injustice. Even small documentation differences, such as a misplaced accent or an inconsistently recorded hyphenated surname, can result in misplaced applications and delayed benefits. When the documentation difference is more substantial, as is the case when a parent or birth certificate holder has changed their name or public gender presentation, the consequences can be much more serious.

My transgender friends, colleagues, and neighbors are likely to face substantial obstacles when they can't easily obtain accurate birth certificates for their children or themselves. In Montgomery County, a parent or guardian needs to show the child's birth certificate for school enrollment. Currently, there is no clear path for trans and nonbinary Marylanders to update their own names on their children's birth certificates. Once they have been granted an order of name change through the Maryland Courts, SB0314 would create a clear path for transgender and/or non-binary parents to correct their children's birth certificates. SB0314 also clarifies that an X marker is permitted on Maryland certificates of birth and ensures existing birth certificates issued by the Maryland Department of Vital Statistics remain valid.

Birth certificates are also fundamental statements of citizenship. For people who change their name or documented gender, there are increasingly serious consequences for having mismatched identity documents, including for employment. Further, if the 2024 SAVE Act is brought back this year and becomes law, it will bar people across the US from voting without proof of citizenship, which is either a passport or a driver's license plus birth certificate. Therefore, mismatched birth certificate information may soon lead to the loss of enfranchisement.

Accurate, clear records and systems hold solemn significance in our lives. Marylanders deserve a clear means to update to their birth certificates to prevent the serious consequences of inaccuracies. I respectfully ask for the Finance Committee's favorable report on S0314: Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act).

Respectfully,

Melissa Ferguson
404 Hannes St.
Silver Spring, MD 20901

SB_314_M_TOPPS_SUPPORT.pdf

Uploaded by: Nichole Sweeney

Position: FAV

**FAVORABLE SUPPORT
FOR
*Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards
– Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)*
(SB 314)**

February 3, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building, Room 241
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Beidle–

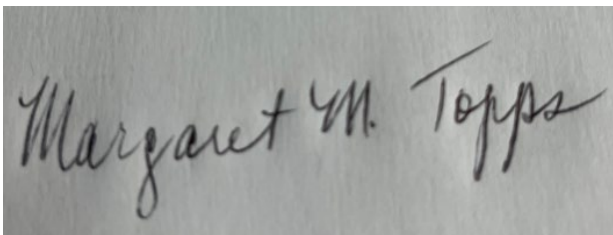
I am writing to support Senate Bill (SB) 314 – *Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards – Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)*. Specifically, I am writing to echo the comments of my child, attached to this letter.

The lack of clarity around updating government-issued identification in Maryland, specifically birth certificates, has caused my child countless hours of physical and emotional stress and harm. Guidance on updating records should be clear for all Marylanders; however, without the passing of SB 314, Marylander’s transgender citizens lack the same access to this clarity.

Although such a law should be a simple, administrative change, it is even more necessary now – transgender Marylanders should not have to endure more psychological and physical pain in the midst of growing hostility both outside our borders and from the federal government. I am proud of the safe-haven my state is for my child, and I implore you to make it that much safer and easier by allowing them a concise and consistent path for updating their records.

For these reasons, I firmly support SB 314. Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

A photograph of a handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored surface. The signature reads "Margaret M. Topps" in a cursive, flowing script.

Margaret M. Topps
District 18
Kensington, Maryland

Attachment

My name is Kellen Sweeney. I live in Baltimore City with my husband and four-year-old child. I work as a health policy consultant to the federal government when I am not busy with my favorite job – being Teagan’s mama. Two years ago, I filed to legally change my name to better reflect my transgender nonbinary gender identity. I am in support of Senate Bill 361.

All Marylanders should have access to accurate government-issued identification documents. These are used in countless financial, health care, benefits, and other transactions on a daily basis. As a parent, I regularly need to produce documents proving my own identity and my relationship to my child.

Government-issued identification works differently for me simply because I am transgender. Because I legally changed my name after giving birth to my child, the name on my driver’s license does not match the name on their birth certificate, meaning I cannot use their birth certificate to prove my parentage for official purposes like applying for his passport.

There is no clear process for remediating the situation. I could not find guidance on the state Division of Vital Records website for how to correct the name of a parent due to a name change; I tried to make an appointment, but it was not clear which type of appointment I needed to request. I just have to show up and hope that whoever I end up talking to is willing to find a creative solution to navigate this scenario. Accessing core government services like accurate identification documents should not be left to individual staff discretion.

By contrast, my ability to obtain an accurate driver’s license was simple. The MVA website clearly indicated that the option was available, how to make the appropriate appointment, and what documentation I needed to bring. The MVA staff were trained on the process, the systems were updated to collect and update the information for this scenario – it worked the way a common government service should. This is because this House passed legislation to make those expectations clear to the agency.

The Maryland General Assembly should pass SB 361 to make these expectations clear regarding updating birth certificates to accurately reflect a parent’s legal name change. Transgender Marylanders and their families deserve the same access to accurate government-issued identification as any other Marylanders.

SB_314_N_SWEENEY_SUPPORT.pdf

Uploaded by: Nichole Sweeney

Position: FAV

**FAVORABLE SUPPORT
FOR
Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards
– *Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)*
(SB 314)**

February 3, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building, Room 241
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Beidle–

I am writing to support Senate Bill (SB) 314 – *Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards – Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)*. Specifically, I am writing to echo the comments of my sibling-in-law, attached to this letter.

The lack of clarity around updating government-issued identification in Maryland, specifically birth certificates, has caused my sibling-in-law countless hours of physical and emotional stress and harm. Guidance on updating records should be clear for all Marylanders; however, without the passing of SB 314, Marylander’s transgender citizens lack the same access to this clarity.

Although such a law should be a simple, administrative change, it is even more necessary now – transgender Marylanders should not have to endure more psychological and physical pain in the midst of growing hostility both outside our borders and from the federal government. I am proud of the safe-haven my state is for my sibling-in-law and their child, and I implore you to make it that much safer and easier by allowing them a concise and consistent path for updating their records.

For these reasons, I firmly support SB 314. Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Ellis' or similar, written in a cursive style.

Nichole Ellis Sweeney
District 18
Kensington, Maryland

Attachment

My name is Kellen Sweeney. I live in Baltimore City with my husband and four-year-old child. I work as a health policy consultant to the federal government when I am not busy with my favorite job – being Teagan’s mama. Two years ago, I filed to legally change my name to better reflect my transgender nonbinary gender identity. I am in support of Senate Bill 361.

All Marylanders should have access to accurate government-issued identification documents. These are used in countless financial, health care, benefits, and other transactions on a daily basis. As a parent, I regularly need to produce documents proving my own identity and my relationship to my child.

Government-issued identification works differently for me simply because I am transgender. Because I legally changed my name after giving birth to my child, the name on my driver’s license does not match the name on their birth certificate, meaning I cannot use their birth certificate to prove my parentage for official purposes like applying for his passport.

There is no clear process for remediating the situation. I could not find guidance on the state Division of Vital Records website for how to correct the name of a parent due to a name change; I tried to make an appointment, but it was not clear which type of appointment I needed to request. I just have to show up and hope that whoever I end up talking to is willing to find a creative solution to navigate this scenario. Accessing core government services like accurate identification documents should not be left to individual staff discretion.

By contrast, my ability to obtain an accurate driver’s license was simple. The MVA website clearly indicated that the option was available, how to make the appropriate appointment, and what documentation I needed to bring. The MVA staff were trained on the process, the systems were updated to collect and update the information for this scenario – it worked the way a common government service should. This is because this House passed legislation to make those expectations clear to the agency.

The Maryland General Assembly should pass SB 361 to make these expectations clear regarding updating birth certificates to accurately reflect a parent’s legal name change. Transgender Marylanders and their families deserve the same access to accurate government-issued identification as any other Marylanders.

SB0314-FIN-SUPP.pdf

Uploaded by: Nina Themelis

Position: FAV



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

SB0314

February 5, 2025

TO: Members of the Senate Finance and Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

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

POSITION: Support

Chairs Beidle and Smith, Vice Chairs Hayes and Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committees, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) respectfully requests a **favorable** committee report on Senate Bill (SB) 314.

SB 314 would amend the process by which the Secretary of Health is required to create and issue a new certificate of birth. Under SB 314, an individual's parent, guardian, or legal representative would be able to request a birth certificate that lists a sex designation that differs from that of the original certificate without approval from a licensed health practitioner and without verifying that the individual has undergone surgical, hormonal, or other treatment. In addition, SB 314 de-genders language relating to parents on individuals' birth certificates and provides for additional opportunities by which a new birth certificate may be requested in the event that the legal name, marital status, and identification of one or both of the parents is made. SB 314 also adds the option to designate "Another" sex on licenses and identification cards in Maryland.

SB 314 is a forward-thinking bill that would bring Maryland law in line with the current scientific and social understanding of non-binary and transgender existence. By allowing individuals to align the sex on their birth certificate to their identity with reduced barriers, Maryland would improve the equity of gender non-conforming individuals within the state. This bill also provides practical advantages by reducing instances of gender discrimination based on legal identity that does not align with one's innate identity. Allowing individuals to more easily request identifying documents that align with their preferred identity also improves accessibility to necessary services, healthcare, and public accommodations that align with their gender identity.

Because of the above reasons, and in order to safeguard against federal threats to nonbinary and transgender Marylanders, The Baltimore City Administration respectfully requests a **favorable** committee report on Senate Bill 314.

SB314_Favorable_Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Renae Ricketts

Position: FAV

Renae Ricketts
8954 Centerway Rd, Gaithersburg, MD, 20879
District 39

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB0314 Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification
Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

2/03/2025

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

FROM: Renae Ricketts

Transgender parents should be able to freely change their own gender designation on the birth certificates of their children to prevent discrepancies between their gender identity and any legal documents related to them. If a parent truly identifies as a gender that is no longer accurate to how they identified when they had their kid, the parent should be able to modify their gender marker to reflect their present-day identity. A person's gender identity is up to the discretion of said person alone, and I care immensely about trans people having the right to legally identify as the gender they personally identify with.

If for any reason a parent tries to change their gender marker to a gender that they do not personally identify with, the bill would call for the parent to be penalized under perjury. This should effectively dissuade those who would want to disingenuously change their gender marker.

In conclusion, I, as a US citizen, am in favor of the SB0314 bill.

Thank you.

Testimony in support of SB0314 - Certificates of B

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

SB0314_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
02/05/2025

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON SB#0314 - FAVORABLE

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

TO: Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and members of the Finance Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0314, **Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)**

Maryland, believing in science and understanding that there is a difference between sex and gender, has an opportunity to acknowledge that fact and resist the Federal Government's attempt to impose a binary view of sex designation on a person's identification documents.

Gender Identity is one's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.¹ This bill understands this and seeks to make identification documents accept this truth.

This bill will accomplish this by altering the circumstances under which the Secretary of Health is required to make a new certificate of birth due to the change of a sex designation of an individual. That document should now designate sex as a current lived truth regardless of the sex assigned at birth. There will be guardrails on establishing requirements and implementing a prohibition related to the making of new certificates of birth in some circumstances. It will also make this sex designation match a person's current gender identity by altering the options for indicating an individual's sex designation on a license, identification card, or moped operator's permit issued by the Motor Vehicle Administration.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#0314.

¹ <https://www.hrc.org/resources/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-terminology-and-definitions>

2025 ACNM SB 314 Senate Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FAV



Committee: Senate Finance Committee

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

Hearing Date: February 5, 2025

Position: Support

The Maryland Affiliate of the American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM) supports *Senate Bill 324 - Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)*. The bill allows the Maryland Secretary of Health to issue a new birth certificate with a sex designation of female, male, or unspecified or another. The new birth certificate cannot show any markings that it was changed. The legislation also removes the requirement that a healthcare provider attests to an individual having undergone treatment for transition.

ACNM supports recognizing the spectrum of gender identities, which include non-binary identities.ⁱ Marylanders should not be forced to choose a binary option on their birth certificates. People should also not have to undergo treatment, including full transition care, to modify a birth certificate that reflects their identity.

Transgender individuals face hostile environment with increasing attacks on their wellbeing and safety.ⁱⁱ This legislation helps mitigate safety risks by their birth certificates match their identities.

We ask for a favorable report on this legislation. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net or (443) 926-3443.

ⁱ American College of Nurse-Midwives. Use of Culturally Appropriate Terminology for Gender Diverse Populations. Silver Spring, MD. American College of Nurse-Midwives; 2017

ⁱⁱ <https://reports.hrc.org/an-epidemic-of-violence-2024>

FreeState_Justice_SB0314_FAVORABLE.pdf

Uploaded by: Ronnie Taylor

Position: FAV



2601 N HOWARD ST
BALTIMORE, MD 21218
TEL 410) 625-LGBT (5428)
FAX 410) 625-7423
www.freestate-justice.org

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.

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Phillip Westry, Esq.
Executive Director

Lauren Pruitt, Esq.
Legal Director

BOARD

Lindsey Young
President

Brianna January

Andrew Adelman, Esq.

Lee Carpenter, Esq.

Brenda Dorsch

Amanda Peskin

Bonnie Smith

Adam Farra

Diana Philip

Tina Jones

Miller Douglas

Lauren Fleming

Andrew Ansel


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](#)

TRAC Testimony - SB314 - Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Sam Williamson

Position: FAV



SB314, Birth Certificate Modernization Act
February 05, 2025
Support

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Finance Committee,

TRAC submits this testimony in favor of SB314, which would streamline procedures for amending sex on birth certificates and introduce a gender-neutral designation option. It would also strengthen protections that reduce the risk of discrimination and harassment by ensuring documents are issued as new, not amended.

TRAC is a Maryland-based and entirely trans-led coalition committed to ensuring that all transgender and gender expansive Marylanders can live safe and affirming lives. Our membership includes healthcare providers, attorneys, academics, organizers and other community members.

We support this bill emphatically because having one's birth certificate align with one's identity, appearance, and life experience is important for one's livelihood and wellbeing. Members of our community need their identification documents to match their appearance and identity, especially in 2025 as more individuals will rely on state documentation for safe and accessible travel and daily life needs. The 94,000 trans and nonbinary Marylanders¹ need safe and accurate identity documents to access various identification cards, medical services, and other important opportunities that are basic human rights.

An accurate birth certificate is necessary to prove one's identity, age, and citizenship status. It is an important document for obtaining a driver's license, social security card, and passport, enrolling in school, opening a bank account, applying for jobs and filling out requisite paperwork, renting and buying homes, driving and renting cars, traveling by airplane, entering secure buildings, applying for government benefits (including Medicaid, food stamps, and social security), joining the military, claiming insurance or pension benefits, and getting a marriage license.

For anyone, these processes are stressful, complex and frustrating. Imagine fearing harassment, rejection, or worse because your birth certificate doesn't align with your identity or presentation. That's a whole lot of living that is obstructed when a bureaucrat, employee, or officer notices a person's gender marker does not match the person's identity or physical appearance and gives them a hard time about it. Indeed, according to the most recent U.S. Trans Survey, 22% of transgender people have been "verbally harassed, assaulted, asked to leave a location, or denied

¹ Meyer, Christopher. "We Can Do More to Support Maryland's 500,000+ LGBTQ+ Residents." *Maryland Center on Economic Policy*, 28 Feb. 2024, mdeconomy.org/we-can-do-more-to-support-marylands-500000-lgbtq-residents/.

services when they have shown someone an ID with a name or gender that did not match their presentation.”²

Trans and nonbinary Marylanders deserve to access necessary services with accurate documents and without harassment or denial of entry. We want to show our IDs without fear of retribution. We want to live free. Let Maryland be the champion for LGBTQ+ rights, joining states like California, New York, Pennsylvania, Arkansas, Vermont, and D.C.³ into the only future that matters, one where we are all equal and valued for what we are - human beings.

We respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB314.

Sincerely,

The Trans Rights Advocacy Coalition

² Sandy E. James *et al.*, 2022 U.S. Trans Survey Early Insights, p. 22 (Feb. 2024), https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/2022%20USTS%20Early%20Insights%20Report_FINAL.pdf.

³ Migdon, Brooke. “Here Are the States Where You Can (and Cannot) Change Your Gender Designation on Official Documents.” *The Hill*, The Hill, 15 Sept. 2022, thehill.com/changing-america/respect/diversity-inclusion/3507206-here-are-the-states-where-you-can-and-cannot-change-your-gender-designation-on-official-documents/.

SZM Testimony SB0314.pdf

Uploaded by: Sam Zisow-McClean

Position: FAV

Testimony in favor of SB 0314 – Birth Certificate Modernization Act

Finance and Judicial Proceedings Committees

February 3, 2025

Esteemed chairs and members of the committees,

I'm writing to you as a trans, nonbinary Maryland parent at a very difficult time. The ability for transgender parents like myself to be able to ensure that our records match our legal names, legal sex and social gender presentation is vital now more than ever. I can attest to the burden of trying to update all necessary documents and to the awkward, scary and sometimes dangerous interactions that happen to trans folks when our documents do not match. This has material consequences for the lives of your constituents. I wish that this legislation was not necessary, but it is critical – especially now. I ask you to move this legislation forward, to help trans parents like myself (and other Marylanders) to be able to more easily access needed documents and services.

Thank you for all you do for Maryland.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sam Zisow-McClean', with a stylized, looping design.

Sam Zisow-McClean

2608 Hamilton Ave

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SB 314 - Senate - FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Sharon Blugis

Position: FAV



BILL NUMBER: SB 314

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

COMMITTEE: Finance

HEARING DATE: February 5, 2025

POSITION: Favorable

Reproductive Justice Maryland supports Senate Bill 314 in keeping with our mission to champion reproductive justice as a fundamental human right for all Marylanders. We believe that everyone deserves the freedom to make informed decisions about their bodies, health, and futures, free from discrimination, coercion, and barriers. This includes the freedom to live without regard to oppressive and harmful notions of gender.

Throughout history, human societies have had differing notions about the necessary attributes and roles ascribed to individuals based on whether they appear to be male or female. There have always been individuals who did not experience fitting neatly into the category they were assigned at birth. While they have always been with us, mainstream American society has only recently begun to recognize their existence, much less to acknowledge the harm of traditional ideas of gender and how these ideas constrain the lives of all people.

In this moment in particular, Senate Bill 360 represents an opportunity for Maryland to stand firm against the federal government's all-out assault on transgender rights. Since the first day of the new presidential administration, we have seen the federal government attempt to erase the very existence of transgender and gender non-conforming individuals. All references to transgender and gender non-conforming people have systemically been scrubbed from federal programs at every government agency. This has been done to communicate the administration's message of intolerance to transgender and gender non-conforming Americans. We can and must take the opposite stance in Maryland.

Senate Bill 314 will not solve the problem of the federal administration's outright hostility towards transgender and gender non-conforming people, but it is a meaningful step that Maryland can take in this crucial moment. Something as simple as having one's driver's license or identification card reflect their true identity can be a lifeline in these dark times for transgender and gender non-conforming Marylanders. Reproductive Justice Maryland is proud to support Senate Bill 314 and urges a favorable report.

Testimony Favorable to SB0314.pdf

Uploaded by: Stanley Wray

Position: FAV

Testimony Favorable to SB0314: Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards – Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

February 5, 2025

Senator Pamela Beidle, Chair, Senator Antonio Hayes, Vice-Chair, and esteemed members of the Finance Committee:

I live in Montgomery County, and my career was in librarianship, including systems management with information about people in them. I am keenly aware of the importance of possessing accurate official documents for accessing services and exerting our rights as citizens, and for records and systems to have accurate information that matches other records and systems. I believe it is discriminatory and unfair to hinder people from correcting their government documentation to match their identity, and therefore I strongly support SB0314. I am seeking your committee's favorable report without amendments.

Birth certificate inaccuracies can create bureaucratic tangles and even injustice. Even small documentation differences, such as a misplaced accent or an inconsistently recorded hyphenated surname, can result in misplaced applications and delayed benefits. When the documentation difference is more substantial, as is the case when a parent or birth certificate holder has changed their name or public gender presentation, the consequences can be much more serious.

My transgender friends, colleagues, and neighbors are likely to face substantial obstacles when they can't easily obtain accurate birth certificates for their children or themselves. In Montgomery County, a parent or guardian needs to show the child's birth certificate for school enrollment. Currently, there is no clear path for trans and nonbinary Marylanders to update their own names on their children's birth certificates. Once they have been granted an order of name change through the Maryland Courts, SB0314 would create a clear path for transgender and/or non-binary parents to correct their children's birth certificates. SB0314 also clarifies that an X marker is permitted on Maryland certificates of birth and ensures existing birth certificates issued by the Maryland Department of Vital Statistics remain valid.

Birth certificates are also fundamental statements of citizenship. For people who change their name or documented gender, there are increasingly serious consequences for having mismatched identity documents, including for employment. Further, if the 2024 SAVE Act is brought back this year and becomes law, it will bar people across the US from voting without proof of citizenship, which is either a passport or a driver's license plus birth certificate. Therefore, mismatched birth certificate information may soon lead to the loss of enfranchisement.

Accurate, clear records and systems hold solemn significance in our lives. Marylanders deserve a clear means to update to their birth certificates to prevent the serious consequences of inaccuracies. I respectfully ask for the Finance Committee's favorable report on S0314: Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act).

Respectfully,
Stanley Tanner Wray III
1206 Highland Dr
Silver Spring, MD 20910

2025 SB314 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: UM SWASC

Position: FAV

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 314

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

Finance Committee

February 5, 2025

Social Work Advocates for Social Change strongly supports SB 314, which will allow individuals who were born in Maryland to change the sex designation on their birth certificate to M, F, or X without additional documentation from a licensed health care practitioner. This bill will also enable parents who have undergone a legal name change to update their names on their child's birth certificate.

SB 314 will protect the safety of trans people. Inaccurate identity documents create situations where trans people are forced to disclose their trans identity, which puts trans people at greater risk of discrimination. Nearly one quarter (22%) of respondents to the 2022 US Trans Survey reported being harassed, assaulted, or denied services after showing an ID with a name or gender marker that did not match their presentation.ⁱ SB 314 will make it easier for trans people to obtain birth certificates that match their gender identity, gender presentation, and the sex designation on other forms of identification documents, reducing involuntary disclosures. The updated birth certificates will be printed to make them indistinguishable from the original birth certificates, which will further reduce the need for involuntary disclosures. Additionally, SB 314 will protect transgender parents from needing to disclose their trans identity in order to prove legal connections to their children.

SB 314 will enable individuals who already have an X marker on their passports or driver's licenses to obtain a birth certificate consistent with these documents.

Maryland residents have been able to change the sex designation on their driver's licenses to an X since 2019.ⁱⁱ One in six (17%) respondents to the Maryland Trans Survey reported already having an X marker on their license or state ID.ⁱⁱⁱ SB 314 will bring the procedures for updating birth certificates in line with those for licenses, simplifying the processes for getting accurate identity documents and reducing the concern and confusion that comes with having inconsistent markers across documents. With this bill, **Maryland will join the 16 other states and Washington D.C. that allow residents to have M, F, or X markers on their birth certificates.**^{iv}

SB 314 will reduce administrative barriers to obtaining accurate birth certificates by eliminating the requirement of additional documentation from a licensed health care practitioner. Currently, individuals must obtain documentation from a licensed physician; psychologist; nurse practitioner, nurse psychotherapist, or clinical nurse specialist; or clinical social worker stating the professional's opinion that the

individual's sex designation should be changed.^v This requirement reflects an incorrect assumption that all trans individuals need medical care related to their transition. Requiring additional verification from a third party also disregards trans people's expertise about their own experience of gender and which sex designation is most accurate and affirming of their individual experiences.

The requirement for documentation from a health care practitioner adds additional costs to people who face significant barriers to healthcare access. Findings from the Maryland Trans Survey illuminate some of these barriers, with 27.6% of respondents reporting that they did not see a doctor when needed in the last year because of cost and 40% of respondents reporting having delayed or gone without preventative care due to concerns about discrimination.^{vi} For the many trans people who already cannot access the health care they need, SB 314 will alleviate some of the burdens created by the current requirements for acquiring accurate birth certificates. **Given the widespread need for healthcare services in general, this bill will also eliminate an unnecessary demand on clinicians' time, allowing them to focus more on direct patient care.**

Social Work Advocates for Social Change urges a favorable report on SB 314.

Social Work Advocates for Social Change is a coalition of MSW students at the University of Maryland School of Social Work that seeks to promote equity and justice through public policy, and to engage the communities impacted by public policy in the policymaking process.

ⁱ James et al. (February 2024). Early insights: A report of the 2022 U.S. transgender survey. National Center for Transgender Equality. https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/2022%20USTS%20Early%20Insights%20Report_FIN_AL.pdf

ⁱⁱ Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration. *Changing Gender Designation*. <https://mva.maryland.gov/about-mva/Pages/changing-gender.aspx>. Accessed February 3, 2025.

ⁱⁱⁱ Clements, Z. A., Riggle, E. D. B., Pease, M. V., & Galupo, M. P. (January 2025). Identity documents and trans people in Maryland: Experiences with name and gender markers. Trans Maryland. <https://doi.org/10.13016/ezko-agvo>

^{iv} Movement Advancement Project. (2025). "Equality Maps: Identity Document Laws and Policies." https://www.mapresearch.org/equality-maps/identity_document_laws. Accessed February 3, 2025.

^v Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Division of Vital Records. (2016). "Change in Sex Designation on a Certificate of Live Birth: Statement of a Licensed Health Care Practitioner". https://health.maryland.gov/vsa/Documents/Corrections/Birth/Gender%20Reassignment/Gender%20Re-Assignment%20instructions%2009_01_2016.pdf. Accessed February 3, 2025.

^{vi} Pease, M. V., Taylor, S., Blinder, L., Clements, Z. A., & Galupo, M. P. (2024, March). Initial findings from the Maryland Trans Survey. Trans Maryland. <https://transmaryland.org/findings2024>

SB314_FAV_ACLU-MD.pdf

Uploaded by: Zoe Ginsberg

Position: FAV



Testimony for the Senate Finance Committee

February 5, 2025

SB 314 – Health – Birth Certificate Modernization Act

FAVORABLE

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GENERAL COUNSEL

The ACLU of Maryland supports SB 314, which seeks to empower Marylanders to access accurate birth certificates for themselves and for their children. These changes will consolidate disparate gender marker policies between Maryland agencies, easing burdens faced by members of the trans community and supporting administrative consistency and transparency.

Trans Marylanders are unlikely to have identity documents that reflect their gender identity. In a 2023 survey conducted by Trans Maryland, only 14.4% of respondents said that all of their identity documents had their correct gender, and 51.2% of respondents had **no** identity documents that reflected their correct gender.¹ Individuals who have a disability or who make less than \$35,000 per year were even less likely to have accurate documents.² A majority of those without updated documents stated that they wanted to change their name or gender marker but had not yet done so, suggesting that administrative barriers prevent individuals from completing this process.

Trans people can face significant challenges if they lack accurate identification. Identity documents are an integral part of everyday life, required for fundamental activities like starting a new job, casting a ballot, traveling, accessing government services, and proving one's identity: trans Marylanders must overcome administrative headwinds just to participate in these aspects of everyday life. Trans people without updated documents are also at higher risk for discrimination and harassment than those with documents that align with their gender identity. A 2022 survey conducted by the National Center for Transgender Equality found that twenty-two percent (22%) of the 92,329 respondents reported being verbally harassed, assaulted, asked to leave a location, or denied services when they have

¹ Zachary A. Clements, *et al.*, *Identity Documents and Trans People in Maryland: Experience with Name and Gender Markers*, TRANS MARYLAND (Jan. 2025), <https://drive.google.com/file/d/10OKGkyBRtFm2uCHyVulf5dDwg-DWSQ1T/view>.

² *Id.*

shown someone an ID with a name or gender that did not match their presentation.³ Lacking these documents can also result in other health problems, including depression, suicidal ideation, and suicide attempts.⁴ These challenges are exacerbated for Black trans individuals, who already face heightened scrutiny from law enforcement and higher rates of harassment and fatal violence.⁵ For all of these reasons, the World Health Organization has stated that lack of access to identity documents that match gender expression is associated with structural and social inequalities that perpetuate stigma and discrimination.⁶

SB 314 would ease these challenges by creating a uniform standard between the Maryland Department of Health Vital Statistics Administration and other Maryland agencies. This standard will clarify the process for trans individuals and for state officials, helping increase the number of individuals who can access gender affirming documents. The bill will also ensure that trans parents can prove they are related to their own children after they have changed their name, helping maintain family connections and preventing future legal difficulties. Additionally, by allowing self-certification of gender under penalty of perjury, the bill will empower all people born in Maryland to access a birth certificate that matches their identity and the identity of their parents regardless of their ability to get sworn statements from medical providers. Committing to these changes will demonstrate Maryland's dedication to ensuring a safe and supportive environment for our trans community.

For the foregoing reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB 314.

³ Sandy E. James *et al.*, *Early Insights: A Report of the 2022 U.S. Transgender Survey*, NATIONAL CENTER FOR TRANSGENDER EQUALITY (2023), https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/2022%20USTS%20Early%20Insights%20Report_FINAL.pdf.

⁴ Kyle KG Tan *et al.*, *Barriers to Possessing Gender-Concordant Identity Documents are Associated with Transgender and Nonbinary People's Mental Health in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, LGBT HEALTH (Sep. 2022), <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9536333/pdf/lgbt.2021.0240.pdf>.

⁵ *The Epidemic of Violence Against the Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Community in the United States*, HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN FOUNDATION (Nov. 2023), <https://reports.hrc.org/an-epidemic-of-violence-2023#>.

⁶ *Policy Brief: Transgender People and HIV*, WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (Jul. 2015), https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/179517/WHO_HIV_2015.17_eng.pdf.

testimony UNFAV SB314 birth certificate 2025.pdf

Uploaded by: Emily Tarsel

Position: UNF

Emily Tarsell, LCPC

2314 Benson Mill Road
Sparks, Maryland 21152
February 05, 2025

Unfavorable SB 314

Certificates of Birth – Sex Designation

Dear Chair Beidle and Finance Committee Members,

I am Emily Tarsell, a mother, licensed mental health therapist and founder of Health Choice Maryland. I write to ask for an Unfavorable vote for SB314 for the following reasons.

Nature does not have a category of “Other” for human biological sex identity. Since the dawn of humanity, Nature has bestowed on humans genitalia that is either male or female. Since this bill addresses “birth” certificates, it would be erroneous to create a category of “Other” which does not exist at birth and is incongruent with Nature and reality.

I understand and I am sympathetic to the fact that there are persons who, overtime, feel that they don't identify with the sex congruent with the organs with which they were born. That does not mean that the birth certificate should be changed. Rather, it suggests that such persons might obtain a supplemental ID certificate attesting to a sex identity change when and if, as adults, they are mature enough to make such a decision.

To recap, birth certificates should not be altered for those who do not identify with the sex congruent with the organs with which they were born. Rather, there could be a supplemental ID created for those, who as adults, wish to declare an alternative sexual identity. Please vote **Unfavorable for SB 314**.

Thank you.

Emily Tarsell, LCPC

2025 SB0314_UNF_mgoldstein 2025.pdf

Uploaded by: Mathew Goldstein

Position: UNF



Secular Maryland

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February 05, 2025

SB 314 - UNF

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

Dear Chair Pamela Beidle, Vice-Chair Katherine Klausmeier, and Members of the Finance Committee,

The appropriate place to document gender identity is on the Maryland ID, not on birth certificates. An infant has an identifiable biological sex based on possessing testes or ovaries as implied by genitalia, or as otherwise determined by medical examination, but does not yet have an identifiable gender identity. Biological sex should not be confused with gender identity which is a cognitive/psychological trait that sometimes conflicts with biological sex. This bill inappropriately allows the replacement of biological sex with conflicting gender on the primary, and often only, official record of biological sex, thus corrupting the reporting of biological sex. Both biological sex and gender identity are important. Which takes priority when they conflict is context and details sensitive. For example, when there is a medical clinical trial for women to determine if a medication has a different impact on women than men, transgender women should not participate. We should be recording biological sex as accurately as we can, particularly for transgender individuals. Gender identity should not displace biological sex as proposed by this bill.

Maryland law properly allows individuals to specify, and easily change, their gender identity on their Maryland ID to be F, M, or X, which is consistent with protecting the integrity of the recording of biological sex on birth certificates. Since it is possible for a biological male to be born with female-like genitalia and internal testes which are externally non-visible, the law should allow subsequent corrections in birth certificates to more accurately record medically confirmed biological sex in contexts where there was ambiguity, or a mistake was made, without promoting a category error.

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Respectfully,
Mathew Goldstein
3838 Early Glow Ln

Bowie, MD

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Uploaded by: Sheila Jennifer

Position: UNF

Finance Committee Chair and Members,

Regarding SB 314 Birth Certificate Modernization, will this bill place Motor Vehicle Administration employees in legal conflict with current Executive Order 14168, as it relates to defining gender identification?

Sheila Jennifer

Howard County, MD