

## Testimony

### Testimony in Support of SB 314 – Birth Certificate Modernization Act

Julius Joi Johnson-Weaver, MD

Transgender Nonbinary Parent

Board Certified Family Physician

CEO and chief physician of Resolve MD Primary Care

February 19, 2025

Maryland General Assembly

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing today to express my strong support for the Birth Certificate Modernization Act (SB 314). This bill is a critical step toward ensuring that all Marylanders, including transgender and nonbinary individuals, have access to accurate and affirming birth certificates.

I am a transgender nonbinary man, a parent, and a physician who provides medical care in a practice that is a safe space for transgender and gender-diverse people. I have seen firsthand the struggles that my community—**our community**—faces in obtaining documentation that accurately reflects our gender identities. Birth certificates are not just bureaucratic paperwork; they serve as foundational documents that impact every aspect of daily life, from accessing healthcare and employment to securing parental rights and legal protections.

For me, as a nonbinary man, the gender marker 'X' fits my gender identity and provides me with a complete sense of who I am. While I was not born in Maryland, I want my fellow community members here to have access to the same affirming documentation. Other states have already adopted this policy, ensuring that transgender and nonbinary individuals can legally exist as themselves. Maryland should be no different.

I believe this Bill matters because of the following reasons:

#### 1. **Ensures Legal Recognition for Families**

- As a transgender parent, I understand the critical importance of accurate documentation to affirm parental relationships. For transgender parents who have legally changed their names, proving their relationship to their own children should not be a fight. This bill eliminates unnecessary barriers that could place families in legal limbo.

## 2. Allows for Accurate Gender Markers

- Transgender and nonbinary people deserve the right to accurate documentation that reflects who we are. Inconsistent policies at the Maryland Department of Health have made this process confusing and inaccessible, despite the fact that 16 other states and Washington, D.C., already allow X gender markers on birth certificates. Maryland must align its policies with its existing commitments to equity and inclusion.

## 3. Reduces Administrative Burden on Marginalized Communities

- I have cared for countless transgender and nonbinary individuals who have struggled for years to correct their documentation. For many, this process is **expensive, bureaucratic, and nearly impossible to navigate without legal assistance**—especially for low-income transgender people who already face higher rates of discrimination in employment and healthcare. This **bill eases that burden** by streamlining access to correct birth certificates.

## 4. Affirms the Validity of Existing Birth Certificates

- This bill does not erase or change past records but ensures that previously issued birth certificates remain valid. It provides clarity and consistency, reducing the risk of legal complications for those who have already updated their documents.

**In a time when transgender and nonbinary people have become a scapegoated community—with our basic civil rights under attack nationwide**—we ask that Maryland stand firm in its commitment to supporting transgender and gender-diverse people. Maryland has long been a leader in protecting LGBTQ+ rights, and passing SB 314 is a continuation of that legacy.

This is not about politics. This is about dignity, respect, and the right to exist with accurate documentation. As a physician, a parent, and a transgender nonbinary Marylander, I urge the General Assembly to pass SB 314 and uphold Maryland's values of equity and inclusion.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Julius Joi Johnson-Weaver, MD

CEO and Physician of:

Resolve MD Primary Care and RMD Proud Gender Affirming Care

Columbia, MD