

Testimony Against HB1129

Honorable Delegates

Please enter an unfavorable report against HB1129.

I am against altering terminology in the Maryland Constitution that refers to constitutional officers to be gender-neutral.

The Constitution has survived for hundreds of years using the male pronoun of him for the third person singular. It is the default in the English language because English does not have a useful non-gender pronoun for the third person singular with the exception of “it”.

If one is going to change the Constitution to be gender neutral, the safest way is to use the position name and avoid using any pronouns. Substituting the third person plural pronoun (they, them, themselves, etc) for the third person singular pronoun (he, him, himself, etc) is grammatically incorrect and just sounds wrong.

For example, look at the proposed change for the language involving the Governor position on page 3, lines 10-12..

The period between a primary election in which the Governor is not renominated or is ineligible to succeed [himself] THEMSELF AS GOVERNOR and the inauguration of the next succeeding Governor;

Perhaps this phrase could be restated as below and avoid using the pronoun “himself”.

The period between a primary election in which the Governor is not renominated or THE GOVERNOR is ineligible to BECOME THE GOVERNOR AGAIN [succeed himself] and the inauguration of the next succeeding Governor;

At a time when we have an extreme budget crisis, should we really be taking the time to discuss minor technical changes to the Constitution? At the very least, wait until there is a more meaningful proposed change to the Constitution and make these proposed changes then.

So please enter an unfavorable report against HB1129

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