

Joel R. Johnson  
1603 Myrtle Rd  
Silver Spring, MD 20902  
[joelrjohnson@gmail.com](mailto:joelrjohnson@gmail.com)

Feb 15, 2025

Maryland General Assembly

**Witness Testimony: HB 1368: Support the Birth Certificate Modernization Act**

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of the Birth Certificate Modernization Act, a critical step toward ensuring that all Marylanders—regardless of gender identity—have access to accurate, affirming, and easily updated identification documents. This bill is not only about fairness; it is about public safety, economic stability, and equal access to services.

Current policies create unnecessary burdens for trans and gender-diverse individuals, requiring invasive and often expensive processes to amend their birth certificates. These barriers disproportionately harm trans black and brown people, people of color, immigrants, disabled individuals, and others who already face systemic challenges in accessing healthcare, housing, and employment. When documents do not match identity, trans folk are more likely to experience discrimination, be denied services, or be forcibly outed—putting their safety at risk.

Modernizing Maryland's birth certificate policies aligns with best practices already adopted in several states, recognizing that gender identity is a fundamental part of a person's existence and should not be subject to excessive legal hurdles. Updating this process will allow trans and gender-diverse Marylanders to move through the world with dignity and without fear, improving public health outcomes, employment opportunities, and overall well-being.

**This is not just a legal issue—it's a human rights issue.** The Birth Certificate Modernization Act ensures that trans and gender-diverse Marylanders can correct their birth certificates without burdensome requirements that expose them to harm. It allows trans people to exist in public spaces, apply for jobs, access healthcare, and live lives without fear of being outed or denied services because of mismatched documents.

I urge you to support this legislation, not only for trans Marylanders but for every Marylander who wants our state to value fairness, equality, and human dignity.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JRJ' with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Joel R. Johnson