



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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House Bill HB1129 Constitutional Officers – Gender – Neutral Language

Health and Government Operations Committee – March 10, 2025

SUPPORT

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2025 legislative session. WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials.

WDC urges the passage of **HB1129**. This bill will bring the Maryland State Constitution on par with other states who have adopted gender neutral language. As of 2024, nine state constitutions—California, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, New York, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Utah, and Vermont—used gender-neutral language.⁽¹⁾ This is important for Marylanders, specifically for women and the LGBTQ+ community, because “grammatical gender can shape how people interpret the world around them along gender lines.”⁽²⁾ Therefore, the use of gender specific pronouns in the Maryland State Constitution such as “his”, “him”, “himself” can be interpreted as a position primarily held by a “man” or expected to be a male dominated position.

State constitutions need to be modernized to reflect the rise in women office holders. “Language matters, it conveys a message about values, it conveys a message about who belongs,” said Debbie Walsh, director of the Center for American Women and Politics.⁽³⁾ As of 2024, 13 women were serving as governor and 2,469 women are serving in state legislatures.⁽⁴⁾ According to the Maryland Commission for Women's 2025 Status [Report](#), Maryland sent 3 women to the U.S. Congress in the last election. In the Maryland state legislature, 30% of the senators and 45% of delegates are women. There are also several members of the LGBTQ+ community in the state senate and house. Finally, Maryland has two women among four elected statewide executive branch officers. It is time that the Maryland State Constitution reflects the reality that all government officials are not and are not expected to be only represented by the male gender and adopt gender neutral language throughout the document.

We ask for your support for HB1129 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.

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WDC President

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