

**Testimony Favorable to HB1368:
Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation
(Birth Certificate Modernization Act)**

February 21, 2025

Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyck, Chair, Delegate Bonne Cullison, Vice-Chair, and esteemed members of the Health and Government Operations 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.**

I wasn't always named Ezra, and before adding children to our family, I didn't really mind the cognitive dissonance caused by needing 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 or nonbinary - 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. HB1368 would change that.

HB1368 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 HB1368 - the Birth Certificate Modernization Act - from the Health and Government Operations Committee.**

Sincerely,
Mx. Ezra Towne
District 18, Wheaton