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LETTER OF SUPPORT HOUSE BILL 1059

Chair Peña-Melnyk:

On behalf of the LGBTQ+ Caucus, we are writing to express our support of **HB1059: Health - Maryland Helping Everyone Afford Life-Saving Treatments and Health Care (HEALTH) Fund and Income Tax Checkoff**. As advocates and stewards of the LGBTQ+ community, we believe this bill will protect, strengthen, and secure LGBTQ+ rights for all LGBTQ+ residents. The benefits and effects of passing the proposed legislation will create a positive and long-lasting change for all of Maryland.

HB1059 establishes a first-of-its-kind fund to bolster and insulate Maryland's public health coverage programs from losses in federal spending and other impacts. The fund will be voluntary only -- no new taxes are imposed -- through direct donations and a tax "check-off" box. The goal is to create a "go-fundme" at the state level for health care costs, and a vehicle for revenues to be directed to in future years that will be used for health coverage. Given the direct attacks on LGBTQ+ health services provided by the state, like care through Medicaid or sexual health services like HIV prevention, any additional funding to offset potential federal losses for the LGBTQ+ community's healthcare is helpful to assist people in getting the care they need.

Thank you for considering the bill's positive effects on the LGBTQ+ community. Please reach out to us regarding any additional questions or concerns on the bill. We appreciate your efforts in fostering community and furthering rights for all Marylanders.

Respectfully,

Delegate Kris Fair, Chairperson