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WOMEN LEGISLATORS OF MARYLAND
THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

February 24, 2025

To: Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair
Delegate Bonnie Cullison, Vice Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee

The Maryland Women's Caucus is proud to express our unanimous support for **HB1129: Constitutional Officers – Gender-Neutral Language**. This critical legislation seeks to modernize the Maryland Constitution by ensuring that references to constitutional officers use gender-neutral language, reflecting the principles of equality and inclusivity that our state upholds.

For far too long, language in legal and governmental documents has reflected outdated norms that fail to acknowledge the leadership and contributions of women and nonbinary individuals in public office. Words matter, and the language used in our governing documents should reflect the values of a modern and equitable democracy. By making these changes, HB1129 ensures that all individuals—regardless of gender—see themselves represented in the highest offices of our state.

Throughout history, women in Maryland have fought tirelessly for equal rights, representation, and opportunities in leadership. While significant progress has been made, barriers to full inclusion remain, and symbolic yet meaningful steps—such as ensuring gender-neutral language in our Constitution—help reinforce that all qualified individuals have an equal place in governance. Representation in language fosters inclusivity, strengthens democracy, and reaffirms our commitment to gender equity.

By passing HB1129, Maryland affirms its dedication to recognizing and respecting the leadership of all individuals who serve as constitutional officers. This legislation is not just a matter of semantics—it is a reflection of our state's progress and its ongoing efforts to promote fairness and equality in every aspect of government.

The Maryland Women's Caucus urges the Health and Government Operations Committee to issue a favorable report on HB1129. Together, we can ensure that Maryland's Constitution reflects the values and principles of a truly representative and inclusive government.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to advancing gender equity in Maryland