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Wednesday February 12, 2025

The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary  
House Ways and Means Committee  
131 Taylor House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

## Testimony of Trans Maryland

### IN SUPPORT OF

#### **House Bill #495:** Education - Antidiscrimination Policies - Policy and Notice Requirements

To the Chair, Vice Chair, and esteemed members of the Ways and Means Committee:

Trans Maryland is a multi-racial, multi-gender, trans-led community power building organization dedicated to Maryland's trans community. Trans Maryland believes in protecting the rights of all Marylanders, particularly transgender community members, to have access to a quality education free of discrimination, whether it be on the basis of gender identity, sexual orientation, race, national origin, native language, disability, or religion.

In order to have a functional anti-discrimination policy, students must be informed as to what the policy is and their rights under this policy. By requiring schools to provide this information in all frequently spoken languages at all levels of education, House Bill 495 helps ensure that students have access to this information.

Access to this information is invaluable in a number of ways as it empowers students who have been the victims of discrimination to speak out and tells marginalized students that they are valued members of the community who will be protected. It can also curtail discrimination and bullying by other students as it establishes the school as a place of community and understanding from the start.

Protecting students from being the victims of bullying and empowering them to stand up for themselves by having an administration that explicitly supports the student body should be the goal of all educational institutions.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on House Bill 495.