

Shiowei Cheng
3512 Lowlen Court,
Ellicott City, MD 21042
District 9B

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB626 – Birth Certificate Modernization Act
2/23/2026

TO: Chair Pamela Beidle, Vice Chair Antonio Hayes, and members of the Finance Committee

FROM: Shiowei Cheng

Chair Beidle and members of the Finance Committee, I am writing in support of SB626, the Birth Certificate Modernization Act. This bill addresses the current inconsistencies in the processes for updating name and gender markers on birth certificates. As of now, there are different requirements from different state agencies when birth certificates need to be updated.

I have loved ones in my communities who have needed to make changes to birth certificates, either for their own or for their children. This bill ensures that parents who have changed their names are able to prove they are related to their own children. For my transgender friends and their medical providers, this bill will help cut costs spent on appointments just to fill out unnecessary paperwork. SB626 would reduce the administrative burden on healthcare professionals so they can spend more time treating their patients. With self-attestation of gender, transgender Marylanders will be able to update their birth certificates to reflect their true, expansive selves. If there are concerns as to who will be able to do this and how, this bill continues to uphold guardrails that prevent fraud.

Let's not keep the process for updating identifying documents antiquated. Passing this bill would follow 13 other states that allow self-attestation of gender, and 16 states plus DC and Puerto Rico that allow the gender marker X on reissued birth certificates.

I urge you to support SB626 to modernize this process for Maryland as well.