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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 626**  
**Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation**  
**(Birth Certificate Modernization Act)**  
*Finance Committee*  
**February 25, 2026**

**Social Work Advocates for Social Change strongly supports SB 626**, which will allow individuals who were born in Maryland to change the sex designation on their birth certificate to M, F, or X without additional documentation from a licensed health care practitioner. This bill will also enable parents who have undergone a legal name change to update their names on their child’s birth certificate.

**SB 626 will protect the safety of trans people.** When identity documents don’t match someone’s name or gender presentation, it raises the risk of harassment and violence. Nearly one quarter (22%) of respondents to the 2022 U.S. Trans Survey reported being harassed, assaulted, or denied services after showing an ID with a name or gender marker that did not match their presentation.<sup>1</sup> The 2023 Maryland Trans Survey shows the scale of this problem in Maryland, finding that **only 14.4%** of respondents had the correct gender marker on all documents, with **51.2%** reporting that **NO** documents reflected their correct gender.<sup>2</sup> **The BCMA would give trans Marylanders the same freedom and privacy afforded to every other Marylander: the ability to have accurate identity documents without undue burden.**

**SB 626 removes unnecessary burdens from medical providers and transgender Marylanders.** By eliminating the need for medical attestation, this bill eliminates demand on clinicians’ time and alleviates the barriers for trans people who already struggle to access the health care they need. More than a quarter (27.6%) of respondents to the Maryland Trans Survey reported that they did not see a doctor when needed in the last year because of cost, and 40% of respondents reported having delayed or gone without preventative care due to concerns about discrimination.<sup>3</sup>

**SB 626 supports the recommendations of Maryland’s Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs.** In its 2026 statewide community needs assessment, Maryland’s Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs recommends that Maryland “reduce administrative and cost barriers in name and gender marker changes” because these barriers impact “employment, housing, health care access, and safety.” The Commission specifically calls for the State to “simplify and standardize processes, reduce unnecessary documentation requirements, and ensure consistent implementation across agencies.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> James et al. (February 2024). Early insights: A report of the 2022 U.S. transgender survey. National Center for Transgender Equality. [https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/2022%20USTS%20Early%20Insights%20Report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/2022%20USTS%20Early%20Insights%20Report_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Pease, M. V., Taylor, S., Blinder, L., Clements, Z. A., & Galupo, M. P. (2024, March). Initial findings from the Maryland Trans Survey. Trans Maryland. <https://transmaryland.org/findings2024>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs. (2026, February 9). *2026 Maryland LGBTQIA+ community needs assessment: Preliminary findings report* [Report]. State of Maryland. <https://goci.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2026/02/2026-Maryland-LGBTQIA-Community-Needs-Assessment-Preliminary-Findings-Report.pdf>

SB 626 helps accomplish these recommendations by eliminating medical gatekeeping, adding an “X” option, and creating a process for trans parents to be accurately named on their child’s birth certificate.

**Numerous other states have created pathways for updated birth certificates for transgender individuals, and Maryland is falling behind each year the Birth Certificate Modernization Act languishes.** By modernizing our birth certificates through the passage of SB 626, Maryland will join 14 states that have updated their administrative processes to allow amendments to birth certificates without medical provider documentation, as well as 16 states and Washington D.C that allow “X” markers on birth certificates.<sup>5</sup> SB 626 also creates consistency across agencies, as Maryland has allowed residents to self-select their gender marker and select an “X” marker on their driver’s licenses and IDs without medical attestation since 2019.

**The Birth Certificate Modernization Act is urgent.** Escalating federal attacks on the rights of transgender Americans continue each day. When federal proposals like the SAVE Act arise and require proof of citizenship to register to vote, inaccurate birth certificates become barriers to voting. The components of SB 626 will allow trans Marylanders to identify themselves safely in a political landscape that invalidates their existence. It is imperative that Maryland take action this legislative session to prioritize trans safety and *demonstrate that our state remains a safe haven for transgender people.*

For these reasons, **Social Work Advocates for Social Change strongly urges a favorable report on SB 626.**

*Social Work Advocates for Social Change is a coalition of MSW students at the University of Maryland School of Social Work that seeks to promote equity and justice through public policy, and to engage the communities impacted by public policy in the policymaking process.*

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<sup>5</sup> Movement Advancement Project. (2025). *Equality Maps: Identity document laws and policies*. October 27, 2025.  
[https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/identity\\_documents](https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/identity_documents)