



Maryland General Assembly
Re: SB 0626

Dr. Kristopher Gebhard, PhD
Soul Soil Healing LLC
3600 Clipper Mill Rd Ste 221
Baltimore, MD 21211

Dear Senators,

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for SB0626, the Birth Certificate Modernization Act. I am a licensed clinical psychologist in Baltimore practicing therapy in a group therapy practice serving transgender, nonbinary, gender-expansive, and LGBTQ populations in Maryland. Over the last 10 years, I have personally worked with hundreds of clients who are transgender, nonbinary, and/or gender-expansive, and I have supported countless individuals through updating their legal documentation to match their lived identity and expression.

Maryland's laws regarding birth certificate modifications are in dire need of updating to allow birth certificates to accurately do their job, and to enable Maryland residents to keep their birth certificates accurate without having to navigate unnecessary red tape. A child with a trans parent deserves a birth certificate that states the name their parent uses now, and has listed on every other identity document. A trans adult deserves a birth certificate that reflects the name and gender marker listed on their driver's license and other identity documents. It is only logical that our birth certificates match our driver's licenses, because conflicting documents create confusion and waste administrative time at every major life event.

It is important that Maryland provide consistent, barrier free access to updating identity documentation. The current requirement for attestation from a mental health provider to change one's gender marker change on a birth certificate is pathologizing, entirely unnecessary, and places a major burden on Maryland residents. Regardless of their actual need, or lack of need, for mental health services, they must pay for a health provider's services to complete the form. Further, it takes providers away from providing care to those who really need our support.

Thank you for supporting and passing SB 0626 to allow us therapists to focus on providing care, rather than filling out unnecessary forms.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kris Gebhard".

Kris Gebhard, PhD
Licensed Psychologist, MD License #06996