

**Testimony Favorable to SB0626:  
Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation  
(Birth Certificate Modernization Act)**

February 23, 2026

Senator Pamela Beidle, Chair, Senator Antonio Hayes, Vice-Chair, and esteemed members of the Finance Committee:

My name is Ezra Towne, and my pronouns are they/them. As a parent, my testimony today is very personal to me. I am an out transmasculine, non-binary person, an advocate and leader in my local trans community, a spouse, and a proud parent of two children (ages 13 and 18). **I fully support SB0626 - and ask for a favorable report without amendments.**

I wasn't always named Ezra, and before adding children to our family, I didn't really mind having to write a different name on my legal documents. But when it came time to enroll my oldest child in school, the dysphoria of having a name I was known by and a legal name that didn't match became intolerable - and I legally changed my name in 2015.

But changing my name did not solve the problem of the name shown on my children's birth certificates - one of the primary proofs of identity in legal matters. As such, my children have incorrect identity documents. It looks as though another person is their parent. Each time I need to provide their birth certificates as evidence of my parenthood, I have to bring along my name change paperwork - this would include obtaining a valid passport for my children.

It is extremely distressing and woefully inconvenient to tote this additional paperwork around. Ezra is my name, and it feels as though it has always been. It is unfair and discriminatory towards me, and others who are trans and/or non-binary to require that we out ourselves to get correct documentation for our children - no one who gets married and changes their name has to prove their parenthood in the same way.

Currently there is no clear path for trans and nonbinary Marylanders to update their own names on their children's birth certificates. SB0626 would change that.

SB0626 does five key things:

- It allows for self-attestation of gender changes under penalty of perjury, bringing it into alignment with current requirements for state identification. Thirteen other states already have this policy in place.
- It brings consistent procedures across agencies that update documentation for trans and nonbinary people.
- It removes the gatekeeping that currently exists when updating a birth certificate in the state of Maryland. It would no longer require documentation from medical providers. The birth certificate change policies as they currently exist disproportionately affect trans folks with low incomes, and overburdens medical providers with unnecessary paperwork.
- It allows reissued birth certificates to include an X gender marker. Sixteen states already have this policy in place.
- It allows parents to update their children's Maryland birth certificates to accurately indicate their correct name and gender. They would no longer be required to carry additional paperwork around in order to prove their parenthood. This protects them from unnecessary outing to employees that process needed identification documents.

I believe that the people of Maryland, the free state, want to do better for trans and non-binary Marylanders. **I respectfully ask for a favorable report on SB0626 - the Birth Certificate Modernization Act - from the Finance Committee.**

Sincerely,  
Mx. Ezra Towne  
District 18, Wheaton