

**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**

My name is Chloe Kastner, and I am a Master of Social Work student at the University of Maryland, Baltimore School of Social Work. **I am writing today in my personal capacity to express my strong support for Senate Bill 626, the Birth Certificate Modernization Act.** This bill will ensure all Marylanders can have access to accurate and affirming birth certificates without unnecessary barriers. This bill removes outdated obstacles that currently hinder transgender Marylanders from obtaining updated, accurate birth certificates with respect to names and gender markers. Birth certificates are essential for securing other identity documents, employment, and services, making it crucial that we ease the burden on those seeking updates.

**My own experience in updating my documents was frustratingly complex and unnecessarily long, taking over nine (9) months.** Living in rural Harford County, I had to make multiple 70-mile round trips to get the necessary documentation, as well as an additional 70-mile round trip to the Division of Vital Records. This does not take in to account the additional administrative costs from providers. Without supportive resource guides from organizations like Trans Maryland, I likely would have had further difficulties navigating the process. These hurdles create real burdens for people who simply want their identity document to reflect who they are. This bill is a simple yet impactful change. It aligns the Division of Vital Records' policies with those of the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration and Maryland Clerks of Court, as well as policies already in place in multiple other states. By creating a uniform process, we remove unnecessary delays, reduce administrative burdens, and ensure Marylanders receive the documents they need without undue hardship.

**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>1</sup> 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

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<sup>1</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>

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>2</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.

**SB 626 is not a radical change, but it is a necessary one.** SB 626 will have a significant impact by simply aligning Maryland with best practices already adopted in other states and internally at other agencies. It ensures dignity in a difficult process while preventing inconsistencies that disproportionately harm those most in need. For these reasons, **I strongly urge a favorable report on SB 626.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Chloe Kastner

District 34B

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<sup>2</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)