

Legislative testimony 2026 birth certificate moder

Uploaded by: Abbie Ellicott

Position: FAV

TESTIMONY in SUPPORT of SB626 (HB1589) Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act) Senate Hearing on 2/25/26

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

We represent the Coalition for LGBTQ+ Students, which is a grassroots organization in Anne Arundel County that supports LGBTQ+ youth through advocacy, policy and education. We strongly **SUPPORT SB626** -- the Birth Certificate Modernization Act.

This bill is an important step in protecting the civil rights, safety and well-being of transgender people in Maryland, by removing unnecessary barriers to modifying one's gender designation on official documents. It also makes it easier for parents to update their children's names on birth certificates, which can be necessary in situations involving victims of crime, domestic violence, and child abuse.

Changing a birth certificate gender marker is an essential aspect of gender affirmation for transgender people. Having a gender marker that corresponds with one's gender identity lowers the risk of harassment, discrimination, and negative health outcomes. Changing a gender designation on official documents is important for transgender people because it means their official IDs accurately reflect their legal identity. It is often required to obtain other legal documents. When an official gender marker does not match a person's gender identity, this can lead to discrimination in areas including medical care, legal proceedings, employment, housing and social stigma. It also has an adverse impact on the transgender person's psychological state and overall safety, as it makes them more vulnerable to harassment, trauma and marginalization.

Research from Brown University School of Public Health shows that legal gender marker and name change is associated with lower negative responses to gender-based mistreatment and better mental health outcomes among trans populations. Experts on trans health and human rights point out that possessing an accurate government ID is often necessary to access healthcare, housing, education and employment and these are resources from which trans people continue to be excluded and denied access.

It makes no sense to require that transgender people get a physician's statement to make this modification. Being transgender is not a medical condition, so a physician's statement should not be needed. This antiquated requirement places an unfair burden on the transgender person, who is already navigating huge barriers to obtaining medical care. It puts a burden on medical providers who are already too busy. Doctors are likely to charge a patient for providing a physician's statement; this creates more financial stress for the transgender person.

Currently, transgender people are terrified and for good reason. The rights of transgender people are under enormous attack. Access to gender affirming health care is being systematically destroyed, transgender soldiers have been banned from serving in the military and have lost retirement benefits, and transgender people across the United States are being scapegoated, vilified and pathologized. Many people, including our elected officials, want to eradicate the rights and identities of transgender citizens. They do not accept that transgender people have existed since the beginning of time and will not disappear or be intimidated into silence. We should not make life harder for transgender people. SB626 removes barriers for transgender citizens in Maryland and conveys respect and acceptance for them as human beings who (like all of us) simply want to live their lives with dignity.

For all these reasons, legal gender affirmation is critically important and should be easily accessible for all transgender citizens in Maryland. Please support SB626.

The Coalition for LGBTQ+ Students
www.coalition4lgbtqstudents.org

2026_SB626_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: C. A.

Position: FAV

2/25/26

The Honorable Chair Pamela Beidle
Chairman, Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SUPPORT of Senate Bill 626 (The Birth Certificate Modernization Act) - FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Beidle and members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Cola and I am a community organizer and a leader of the BRIDGES Coalition for Overdose Prevention Centers (OPC). I am also a trans woman, and I know firsthand that the ability to simply and safely prove who you are is fundamental to living a life with security.

While I have legally changed my name and gender marker on many documents, my birth certificate remains unchanged. This inconsistency has created and has the potential for future confusion, unsafety, and violence in my life, and it is a reality far too many transgender Marylanders face. I want to be able to navigate the world without that immense pressure. Every interaction that forces me to reconcile outdated identity documents with my lived reality is deeply triggering for me personally and embarrassing that I'd have to disclose sensitive information others aren't also subject too; It's a very uniquely uncomfortable situation.

That is why I urge your support for **SB626**, the Birth Certificate Modernization Act.

This bill is a critical step to make life easier and safer for all Marylanders. It will help parents who have legally changed their names update their information on their children's birth certificates which is so meaningful. Most crucially, it will modernize the process for transgender Marylanders by allowing us to update the gender marker on our own birth certificates through **self-attestation**, instead of requiring attestation from a medical or mental health provider.

This reduces administrative burden, cuts state costs, and creates consistent standards across state agencies. Supporting SB626 makes it an easier process from everyone involved while providing agency to trans people who have the right for the documents to align with who we are. Accurate documentation can lead to safety and access for a vulnerable group. Protecting the right to accurate identity documents is a fundamental community care and safety strategy.

This is an emergency, and we urge you to act now. **I ask that the Finance Committee give SB626 a favorable report.**

For more information please contact Cola Anderson at Colaayanderson@gmail.com

SB0626-Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Cass Caveney

Position: FAV

February 23, 2026

The Honorable Biedle
Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: SUPPORT of Senate Bill 626: Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards
- Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)**

To the Chairs, Vice Chairs, and esteemed members of the Finance and Judicial Proceedings Committees,

My name is Cass Caveney and I am a longtime resident of Silver Spring, Maryland. In 2019, I applied for and received an updated Maryland driver's license with my correct X gender marker via self attestation, the same way other attributes like height, weight, and eye color are recorded. In the nearly seven years since that day, I have not once encountered any problems with my accurate ID and no one else I know who did the same in Maryland has encountered any problems either.

I commend the Maryland General Assembly for passing SB 196 in 2019 into law via a bipartisan majority, materially improving the lives of Marylanders like myself. Now is the time to pass SB 626, the Birth Certificate Modernization Act, to extend the same extremely successful framework to Maryland birth certificates. Although I will not personally benefit from this bill, having been born in the state of Georgia, I testify in support of improving the lives of all those born in the state in which I've lived for over two decades, no matter where they reside now. The Maryland General Assembly has a chance to improve so many lives with this one simple bill.

Nothing about this bill is unprecedented. Providing an option for X gender markers on birth certificates is a common sense policy implemented by California, Colorado, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Mexico, New Jersey, New York, Nevada, Oregon, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, and Washington, thirteen of which also allow self-attestation

I ask the Finance Committee and the Judicial Proceedings Committee, Energy to give SB626 a favorable report.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

February 23, 2026

Cass Caveney

SB 0626 Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Ident

Uploaded by: Catherine OMalley

Position: FAV

BILL NO: Senate Bill 0626
TITLE: Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)
COMMITTEE: Finance/Judicial Proceedings
HEARING DATE: February 25, 2026
POSITION: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

Senate Bill 0626, which alters the circumstances under which the Secretary of Health is required to issue a new certificate of birth following a change in sex designation, as well as modifies the options available for indicating an individual's sex designation on state-issued identification cards, represents a significant and inclusive step forward in recognizing the rights and dignity of transgender and gender non-conforming individuals. From a legal perspective, this bill upholds fundamental principles of autonomy, privacy, and equal protection under the law by ensuring that individuals can accurately and respectfully reflect their gender identity in both vital records and identification documents.

A core principle in civil rights law is the right to self-identify, particularly when it comes to issues of identity and personal autonomy. For transgender individuals, the ability to change their sex designation on a birth certificate or state-issued identification is essential for their social and legal recognition. This bill creates a framework where transgender individuals are no longer forced to live in a state of legal dissonance—where their gender identity is inconsistent with official records—thereby reducing the risk of discrimination, harassment, and harm. By altering the circumstances under which a new certificate of birth can be issued, the bill ensures that these changes are made in a way that is both respectful and consistent with the individual's own self-determined identity.

Moreover, the bill's provisions regarding the Motor Vehicle Administration's issuance of updated licenses and identification cards further enhance the accessibility and accuracy of identity documentation. The inclusion of an option to indicate an individual's sex designation, which may include options beyond the binary categories of male and female, acknowledges the existence and validity of non-binary and gender-expansive identities. By providing clear guidelines for when and how an individual's sex designation can be updated on their birth certificate and other legal documents, the bill also ensures that these processes are standardized and equitable, avoiding the inconsistencies and discriminatory practices that have historically plagued transgender individuals seeking recognition of their gender identity.

To reconcile the provisions of this bill with potential conflicts in recent Executive Orders, we propose the amendment below to comply with shifting federal regulations without forcing Marylanders to misrepresent their gender identity on state-issued documents. This provision supports Maryland's approach to gender designation while protecting transgender and gender-nonconforming residents.

In cases where federal law requires sex designation on government-issued identification documents, including passports, visas, and Global Entry cards, to conform with specific definitions or criteria, the Maryland Department of Health's Department of Vital Records will support individual requests to complete the DS-10 Birth Affidavit instead.

The Women's Law Center strongly supports SB 0626 for promoting the dignity and safety of our trans and gender non-conforming community. Executive Orders come and go with each presidential administration; with SB 0626, Maryland has the opportunity to protect our people in perpetuity.

The Women's Law Center of Maryland is a non-profit legal services organization whose mission is to ensure the physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy of women in Maryland. Our mission is advanced through direct legal services, information and referral hotlines, and statewide advocacy.

SB626 testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Cathrine Schmid

Position: FAV

Bill: SB 626 ("Birth Certificate Modernization Act")

Position: Favorable

Committee: Finance

Hearing Date: 25 February 2026

Senator Lam, Chair Beidle, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Cathrine Schmid, and I am a resident of Baltimore and a constituent of District 41. I am writing to urge you to vote YES on SB 626.

Maryland is my home, but I was born in Michigan, the child of an Air Force servicemember. I am also transgender. On paper, I technically have the ability to change the sex marker on my Michigan birth certificate. In practice, that process means jumping through a series of hoops, paying fees, and, at the end, receiving a document that is still clearly stamped as "amended."

In an era of increasingly hostile rules and regulations targeting trans people, that "amended" label is not neutral. It is a flag on my record that invites extra scrutiny at exactly the moments when identity documents matter most: applying for jobs, dealing with bureaucracies, traveling, proving who I am and that I belong. Many of the new federal and state rules require "unamended" documentation, turning what should be a simple correction into a lifelong barrier.

I do not want my friends and neighbors here in my adopted home to have to navigate the same minefield. SB 626 cannot fix what Michigan does, or what the federal government requires, but it can make sure that Marylanders have access to accurate, up-to-date, and unmarked birth certificates that reflect who they are and who their families are without forcing them to out themselves or defend their existence every time they present their documents.

This bill is, at its heart, about making sure that ordinary Marylanders can live ordinary lives: parents who can prove they are their children's parents, citizens whose paperwork matches the name and gender they live every day, and young people who are not set up for a lifetime of explaining an asterisk on one of their most important documents. You have the power to spare your constituents from obstacles that people like me know all too well.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to vote YES on SB 626 and to move Maryland one step closer to being a place where all of us can be free of these unnecessary barriers.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Cathrine Joy Schmid
Baltimore, Maryland

SB0626 – Certificates of Birth^J_Licenses^J_and_Id

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY

SB0626 – Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards – Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

Bill Sponsor: Senator Lam

Committee: Senate Finance

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, CoChair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in support of **SB0626** on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. We are an association of unpaid citizen advocates—individuals and grassroots groups in every district across the state—representing and supporting more than 30,000 Marylanders.

Not everyone fits neatly into the traditional definitions of male and female, yet nearly every part of our society is structured around those categories. SB0626 provides a straightforward way for people who do not fit those definitions to have their birth certificates accurately reflect who they are.

SB0626 updates Maryland’s process for issuing new birth certificates when an individual changes their sex designation. The bill clarifies when the Secretary of Health must issue a new certificate and establishes requirements and prohibitions to ensure the process is consistent, respectful, and protective of personal privacy.

The bill allows individuals to amend their birth certificate to designate their sex as “other” or “unspecified,” and it permits changes to a parent’s name. Importantly, these updates will **not** result in the new birth certificate being marked as amended. That protection matters—it ensures privacy, dignity, and equal treatment. Flexibility should exist in our institutions to match the flexibility with which people define themselves.

SB0626 aligns directly with the mission of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. Our work centers on transparency, accountability, and social justice. This bill ensures that state documents reflect people accurately and respectfully, consistent with our work. Therefore, we respectfully urge a **FAVORABLE** report on SB0626.

SB0626 - Birth Certificate Modernization Act - Tes

Uploaded by: Charlotte Hoffman

Position: FAV



Charlotte Persephone Hoffman, Esq. (they/she)
Policy Director
charlotte@transmaryland.org

February 23, 2026

The Honorable Biedle
Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Testimony of Trans Maryland

IN SUPPORT OF

**Senate Bill #626: Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards -
Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)**

To the Chairs, Vice Chairs, and esteemed members of the Finance and Judicial Proceedings Committees:

Trans Maryland is a multi-racial, multi-gender, trans-led community power building organization dedicated to Maryland's trans community. Trans Maryland runs the state's largest name and gender marker change program, offering peer-to-peer guidance and financial assistance to Marylanders seeking a name and gender marker change. As part of this work, we have helped hundreds of transgender Marylanders update their identity documents, and we have witnessed firsthand the barriers that existing law creates to trans Marylanders trying to obtain ID documents that affirm their identity and human dignity.

Fortunately, Senate Bill 626, the Birth Certificate Modernization Act, will significantly reduce these barriers in three key ways. First, it will create a standardized process by which transgender parents—and, indeed, anyone who has changed their name for any reason—can update their own information on their children's birth certificates, which will make it easier for parents to establish their relationship with their children without outing themselves as trans or their children as having transgender parents. Second, the bill will remove the requirement for transgender people to have the sign off of a medical provider before they can change the gender marker on their own birth certificate—a change that has already been adopted by 14 other states, including Nevada, Michigan, and Illinois. Finally, the bill will clarify that individuals may change their



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Maryland birth certificate to use an X gender marker (defined in the bill as “unspecified or another” gender), bringing Department of Health practice in line with the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration, which has per a statutory mandate issued X gender markers without issue since 2019.

Making it Easier for Parents to Amend Their Information on Children’s Birth Certificates

For parents across Maryland, there is no document more important for establishing your relationship with your child than that child’s birth certificate. Whether you are registering your child for school, applying for health insurance or public benefits, or simply making sure you have all your documents in order before traveling, your child’s birth certificate is your best evidence to prove that you are, in fact, their parent. This is doubly true for parents whose relationship with their own child is often questioned, whether they be adoptive parents, parents in multiracial couples, LGBTQIA+ parents, or a mix of all three.

Unfortunately, there is currently no law, regulation, or standardized departmental process by which parents who have changed their names for any reason may update their information on their children’s birth certificates. Because of this, many trans parents—alongside abuse survivors, victims of crime, and others who have changed their names—must provide a stack of documentation to prove that they are in fact the parent listed on the birth certificate, outing themselves in the process, as well as potentially setting their child up for discrimination because they have a trans parent.

Because there is no law or guidance on this issue, many parents seeking to change their names on their children’s birth certificates are told by staff at the Division of Vital Records that it is impossible to do so or that they must first obtain a court order. Other times, the Division of Vital Records will issue an amended birth certificate that strikes out the parent’s former name in a way that is often still readable. While some few are lucky and are given a new (not amended) birth certificate for their child that properly updates the parent’s information without revealing their former name—and potentially putting them at risk of violence or discrimination—the process is largely a roll of the dice, with some parents having to come back multiple times or even file a costly (and time-consuming) petition with the court.

The Birth Certificate Modernization Act streamlines this whole process, allowing parents to change their information by submission of a simple form and a copy of their court-ordered name change. This will not only simplify matters for parents like myself who have changed our names, it



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will also increase productivity within the Division of Vital Records, as staff will now have a clear process to point to when such requests are made. No longer will each staffer be required to reinvent the wheel.

Removal of Requirement for Medical Sign-Off for Gender Changes

Under existing Maryland law, adopted a decade ago in 2015, transgender people born in Maryland may change the gender marker on their Maryland birth certificate by submitting either a court order recognizing their gender identity or a form signed by a medical provider affirming that they have undergone treatment related to their gender identity. The Birth Certificate Modernization Act will streamline this process by eliminating the need for transgender people to acquire medical sign-off, reducing costs for both the individual and the state, decreasing burdens on our already overworked healthcare system, and bringing Maryland law in line with that of 14 other states that already permit self-attestation of gender identity on birth certificates.

Requiring trans people to provide a sign-off from a medical provider is a disproportionate burden on low-income and under-insured trans Marylanders. Many of Trans Maryland's program participants do not have primary care providers, face challenges in finding affirming providers who will take them on as a client because they live in rural areas or underserved suburbs, or simply do not have the time off work or the economic resources for the multiple office visits that are often required.

The situation has only become more dire over the past thirteen months. With the second Trump Administration's attacks on access to transition-related care, we have seen providers withdraw from the market entirely rather than risk losing all Medicare or Medicaid funding. As a result, the healthcare practices that continue to provide care have found themselves picking up the slack, having to serve more and more patients with less and less funding. Asking providers to spend their precious moments filling out unnecessary paperwork in this environment—especially when the paperwork could potentially be used against them by the federal government in a frivolous investigation down the line—is a waste of Maryland's limited medical resources.

Even those who do have a regular affirming provider find that getting gender designation letters can be an administrative nightmare, with medical providers frequently filling the forms out incorrectly, failing to provide the forms in a timely manner, or requiring the patient to liaise with multiple different offices to get the form. Our program participants have experienced wait times of over 5 months for an appointment with their medical provider, only to have the provider fail to



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complete the form accurately for several more months after that initial appointment. This lack of access negatively impacts that transgender individual's ability to ensure their ID documents match, and prevents the individual's ability to seek employment without disclosing their transgender status.

In my own personal case, my provider—a Federally Qualified Health Center specializing in care for the LGBTQIA+ community—required me to make the request not with my doctor, but with the clinic's legal office, where I conducted an intake with a paralegal (in which I repeated information already known by the provider). The paperwork was then sent to my doctor, who signed off on it, then sent it back to the office's legal department. Finally, it was eventually sent back to me. I estimate that this entire process took multiple staff hours of time just to sign a simple form. Had I not been an expert on these issues who worked in transgender law and policy, there is a strong chance I would have been discouraged by the entire process and stopped before I ever got my paperwork finalized. The Birth Certificate Modernization Act will eliminate this burden and risk for other trans Marylanders, so they will not have to go through the same Byzantine process I had to go through.

But while the Birth Certificate Modernization Act will allow trans individuals to self-attest to our gender identity on Maryland Birth Certificates, it will not open the floodgates to fraud or ill-intent. While the bill removes the requirement for medical sign-off, it *adds* a provision requiring the affirmation of gender identity to be made under penalty of perjury. As such, any effort to change one's gender marker for a fraudulent or criminal purpose could be punished not only for the underlying crime (e.g., fraud), but also for perjury. As such, we strongly believe the Birth Certificate Modernization Act strikes the balance between easing administrative burdens on transgender people, while ensuring accuracy of information.

Finally, because the state ultimately pays at least part of the cost of many of these appointments with health care providers—whether through Medicaid, ACA marketplace plans, or individuals on the state employee health plan—eliminating these unnecessary medical visits will ultimately help to combat Maryland's current deficit, one appointment at a time.

Availability of Third Gender Marker (X) on Maryland Birth Certificates

In 2019, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation instructing the Motor Vehicle Administration to permit individuals to select the third gender marker of X, defined in statute as “unspecified or other,” in lieu of the traditional M or F designations. Unfortunately, because the



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2019 legislation did not directly address the question of Maryland birth certificates, it has led to uncertainty as to whether the Department of Health may also allow people born in Maryland to change their gender marker on their birth certificate to an X. The Birth Certificate Modernization Act ends this uncertainty by expressly stating the Department of Health may use X markers on birth certificates and by making a tiny amendment to the 2019 MVA legislation (changing “other” to “another”) to better match legislation and policies in other jurisdictions.

Currently, 16 states (including Utah) and the District of Columbia permit the selection of a third gender marker (typically an X) on birth certificates, meaning Maryland would be far from unique on this front. The X gender marker is already permitted on Maryland driver’s licenses and state ID cards—the Birth Certificate Modernization Act merely brings the Department of Health policy in line with law the General Assembly passed by an overwhelming margin seven years ago.

What the Birth Certificate Modernization Act Will Not Do

It is crucial to remember that the Birth Certificate Modernization Act is at its core a bill to modernize the process by which the Department of Health issues birth certificates with updated information for transgender individuals and their children. Despite likely fearmongering from opponents, the bill does not substantively change Maryland law or policy in other arenas.

In particular, the Birth Certificate Modernization Act *will not*:

- *Change the medical standards of care for transgender adults or youth;*
- *Affect how housing decisions are made for incarcerated transgender people;*
- *Alter existing processes for obtaining driver’s licenses or state IDs;*
- *Affect the ability of Marylanders to obtain federal documents like a passport or Social Security card*
- *Amend Maryland’s nondiscrimination or hate crimes laws, which already treat gender identity as a protect class;*
- *Change how gender is designated on birth certificates at the time of birth; or*
- *Allow individuals to change the gender designation on their Maryland birth certificate for fraudulent or criminal purposes.*



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Conclusion

Senate Bill 626 is a straightforward procedural bill designed to make it easier for transgender individuals to update their own and their children's birth certificates to more accurately reflect who they are, so that they and their families are not unnecessarily subjected to discrimination when required to present the birth certificate as an identity document. It implements changes Maryland has already had in place for six years for driver's licenses and state ID cards—changes that have not in that time caused the sky to fall and have not opened a Pandora's box of unanticipated problems. Instead, it has merely improved the ability of transgender Marylanders to obtain affirming ID documents and minimize risk of discrimination. As we have established, this is all the Birth Certificate Modernization Act will do as well.

For these reasons, Trans Maryland urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 626.

TRANS MARYLAND



Support the Birth Certificate Modernization Act (SB 626 & HB 1589)

The Birth Certificate Modernization Act (Senate Bill 626, House Bill 1589) will make it easier for parents to update their information on their children's Maryland birth certificates, as well as modernize the process for transgender Marylanders updating the gender marker on their own birth certificates.

THE PROBLEMS ADDRESSED BY THE BCMA:

- Marylanders who change their names for any reason—whether they are transgender, abuse survivors, victims of crime, etc.—have no consistent way to request an update of their own information on their children's birth certificates.
- Transgender Marylanders who want to update the gender markers on their Maryland identity documents are subjected to different rules at different agencies. The Motor Vehicle Administration and State Board of Elections have allowed self-selection of gender since 2019, while the Maryland Department of Health requires attestation by a medical or mental health provider.
- At a time when they are under attack by the federal government, medical and mental health providers are spending precious time filling out paperwork instead of treating patients.

THIS BILL WILL:

- Enable parents who have legally changed their names to prove they are related to their own children.
- Reduce the administrative burden on over-worked medical providers, as well as on members of the transgender community (especially low-income trans people) seeking to update their ID documents.
- Cut state costs to Medicaid spent on unnecessary appointments with providers to fill out paperwork.
- Adopt consistent state requirements across agencies for updating gender markers on ID.
- Bring Maryland policy in line with the 13 states that allow self-attestation of gender, as well as the 16 states, DC, and Puerto Rico that allow X gender markers on reissued birth certificates.
- Require attestation of gender on birth certificates to be made under penalty of perjury.

THIS BILL DOES NOT:

- Amend existing state law or policies regarding housing incarcerated transgender people or participation in school sports.
- Change the medical standards of care for transgender health for adults or youth.
- Impact or change existing processes for obtaining driver's licenses or state IDs.
- Alter or amend Maryland's nondiscrimination laws, hate crimes law, etc., which already treat gender identity as a protected class.
- Change how gender is designated on birth certificates at the time of birth.
- Allow individuals to change the gender designation on their birth certificate for fraudulent or criminal purposes.

TRANS MARYLAND

Supporting Organizations



SB 626 - KAST - BCMA - FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Chloe Kastner

Position: FAV

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."¹ 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

¹ 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.² 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

² Movement Advancement Project. (2025). *Equality Maps: Identity document laws and policies*. October 27, 2025. https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/identity_documents

SB 626 - FAV Chris West.pdf

Uploaded by: Christopher West

Position: FAV

SB 626 - Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act) (FAV)

Chris West
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Reisterstown, MD 21136
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410-949-7057

Chair, members of the committee –

I am writing to express my strong support for the Birth Certificate Modernization Act (SB 626 / HB 1589).

As the parent of a transgendered daughter born in Colorado, we were able to update her birth certificate with relative ease; however, I've seen friends of mine jump through hoops to update their child's birth certificate that was issued here in Maryland.

The bill establishes consistent and reasonable standards for updating gender markers on birth certificates for transgender Marylanders. Although several state agencies already permit self-attestation, the Maryland Department of Health continues to require documentation from medical or mental health providers. This inconsistency creates avoidable obstacles—especially for low-income individuals—and pulls providers away from patient care to complete unnecessary paperwork.

This legislation also addresses real and practical problems faced by Maryland families today who may not have a transgendered child. For example, if parents legally changed their names for safety concerns, they often have no easy way to update their children's birth certificates. Because of this, it can be difficult to prove a parent-child relationship.

This legislation offers thoughtful, limited solutions. It would bring Maryland into alignment with many other states that already allow self-attestation. It also reduces red-tape and unnecessary Medicaid costs (getting a MD to sign off on paperwork).

This legislation advances good governance by improving efficiency and consistency across state agencies. It helps parents navigate essential family documentation and ensures that identity records are accurate and reliable, all without expanding state policy beyond its intended and appropriate scope.

I respectfully urge you to support SB 626 / HB 1589 and help Maryland continue to lead with fairness, compassion, and good governance.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Chris West

315 Townleigh Road

Reisterstown, MD 21136

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SB626_Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Coen Doss

Position: FAV

Bill: SB626
Position: Favorable
Committee: Finance
February 22, 2026

Favorable Testimony for SB626 – Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

Honorable Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Coen Doss, and I am a Master of Social Work student at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, a member of Maryland's LGBTQ+ community, and a resident of Legislative District 32.

As someone born in Florida, I've made my peace with the fact that my home state will never allow me to correct my birth certificate. The document I have doesn't reflect who I am, and legally, I have no pathway to fix it. That's precisely why I'm writing in **strong support of SB626, the Birth Certificate Modernization Act**. While my own state has chosen to shackle people to documents that misrepresent them, Maryland has the opportunity to choose the path of accuracy, dignity, and respect.

This bill isn't about granting new rights. It's about ensuring that a life-long document tells the truth. For transgender people, for intersex individuals, and anyone whose gender identity differs from what was assigned to them at birth, an accurate birth certificate isn't a luxury. It's a necessity for safety, employment, travel, and daily life. By removing burdensome requirements like affidavits from medical providers and creating a straightforward process for transgender parents to update the birth certificate(s) of their child(ren), this bill affirms that a person knows themselves best.

I may never have the chance to correct my own birth certificate, but I can stand in solidarity with Marylanders who deserve that opportunity. Florida's loss can be Maryland's gain. Show the country what real leadership looks like by treating all of your residents with the humanity they deserve.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable report of SB626.

Thank you for your consideration.

SB626_ACLUMD_DVS.pdf

Uploaded by: Dana Vickers Shelley

Position: FAV



Testimony for the Senate Finance Committee

February 25, 2025

SB 626 – Health – Birth Certificate Modernization Act

FAVORABLE

DANA VICKERS SHELLEY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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GENERAL COUNSEL

The ACLU of Maryland supports SB 626, which empowers Marylanders to access accurate birth certificates for themselves and for their children. These changes will streamline gender marker policies among different Maryland agencies, easing burdens faced by members of the transgender community.

Trans Marylanders are unlikely to have identity documents that reflect their gender identity. In a 2023 survey conducted by Trans Maryland, only 14.4% of respondents said that all of their identity documents had their correct gender, and 51.2% of respondents had no identity documents that reflected their correct gender.¹ Individuals who have a disability or who make less than \$35,000 per year were even less likely to have accurate documents.² A majority of those without updated documents stated that they wanted to change their name or gender but had not yet done so, suggesting that administrative barriers prevent individuals from completing this process.

Trans people can face significant challenges if they lack accurate identification. Identity documents are an integral part of everyday life, required for fundamental activities like working, voting, travelling, accessing government institutions, and proving one's identity. Lacking these documents not only makes it harder to participate fully in these activities, but can also result in other health problems, including depression, suicidal ideation, and suicide attempts.³ Trans people without updated documents are also at higher risk for discrimination and harassment than those with documents that align with their gender identity. A 2022 survey conducted by the National Center for Transgender Equality found that twenty-two percent (22%) of the 92,329 respondents reported being verbally harassed, assaulted, asked to leave a location or denied services when they have shown

¹ Zachary A. Clements, et al., *Identity Documents and Trans People in Maryland: Experience with Name and Gender Markers*, TRANS MARYLAND (Jan. 2025), <https://drive.google.com/file/d/100KGkyBRtFm2uCHyVulf5dDwg-DWSQ1T/view>.

² *Id.*

³ Kyle KG Tan et al., *Barriers to Possessing Gender-Concordant Identity Documents are Associated with Transgender and Nonbinary People's Mental Health in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, LGBT HEALTH (Sep. 2022), <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9536333/pdf/lgbt.2021.0240.pdf>.

someone an ID with a name or gender that did not match their presentation.⁴ For all of these reasons, the World Health Organization has stated that lack of access to identity documents that match gender expression is associated with structural and social inequalities that perpetuate stigma and discrimination.⁵

SB 626 would ease these challenges by creating a uniform standard between the Maryland Department of Health Vital Statistics Administration and other Maryland agencies. This uniform standard will clarify the process for both trans individuals and state officials, helping increase the number of individuals who can access gender affirming documents. Doing so will demonstrate Maryland's commitment to ensuring a safe and supportive community for our transgender community.

For the foregoing reasons, the ACLU of Maryland urges a favorable report on SB 626.

AMERICAN CIVIL
LIBERTIES UNION
FOUNDATION OF
MARYLAND

⁴ Sandy E. James et. al., *Early Insights: A Report of the 2022 U.S. Transgender Survey*, NATIONAL CENTER FOR TRANSGENDER EQUALITY (2023), https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/2022%20USTS%20Early%20Insights%20Report_FINAL.pdf.

⁵ *Policy Brief: Transgender People and HIV*, WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (Jul. 2015), https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/179517/WHO_HIV_2015.17_eng.pdf.

SB626 Favorable 2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Debi Jasen

Position: FAV

Finance Committee
Senate Bill 626
Favorable

Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Finance Committee;

Please give Senate Bill 626 a favorable report.

Birth certificates are among the documents used to verify one's identity, and also identify one's parents' identities. When they enroll their children in school and in camps, birth certificates are often requested, showing the identities of the parents. They need to show their children's birth certificates and their own IDs when getting their minor children passports. Sometimes they need to bring their children's birth certificates on flights. Transgender parents shouldn't have to out themselves each time their children's birth certificates are needed, and they shouldn't have to jump through expensive and time-consuming hoops in order to get their correct name and gender on their children's birth certificates.

I urge you to support Senate Bill 626. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Debi Jasen
Pasadena, MD

SB 626 - FAV Debra West (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Debra West

Position: FAV

**[SB 626](#) - Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation
(Birth Certificate Modernization Act) (FAV)**

Debra West
315 Townleigh Road
Reisterstown, MD 21136
dwest1099@ gmail.com
443-769-7110

Chair, members of the committee –

I am writing to express my strong support for the Birth Certificate Modernization Act (SB 626 / HB 1589).

This legislation addresses real and practical problems faced by Maryland families today. Currently, parents who have legally changed their names—whether due to marriage, divorce, gender transition, or safety concerns—often have no consistent or reliable way to update their information on their children’s birth certificates. This can make it unnecessarily difficult to prove a parent-child relationship, creating burdens that no family should have to navigate.

The bill also brings much-needed consistency and fairness to how transgender Marylanders update the gender marker on their birth certificates. While several state agencies already allow self-attestation, the Maryland Department of Health still requires certification from medical or mental health providers. This discrepancy creates unnecessary barriers, particularly for low-income individuals, and diverts providers’ time away from patient care and toward paperwork.

The Birth Certificate Modernization Act offers thoughtful, limited solutions. It reduces administrative burdens, cuts unnecessary Medicaid costs tied to provider visits solely for documentation, and aligns Maryland with many other states that already allow self-attestation under penalty of perjury. Importantly, it does so without changing medical standards of care, nondiscrimination laws, school sports policies, or procedures at the time of birth.

This bill is about efficiency, consistency, and dignity. It helps parents care for their families, allows state agencies to operate more effectively, and ensures that Marylanders’ identity documents accurately reflect who they are—without creating new risks or expanding policy into unrelated areas.

I respectfully urge you to support SB 626 / HB 1589 and help Maryland continue to lead with fairness, compassion, and good governance.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Debra West

315 Townleigh Road

Reisterstown, MD 21136

dwest1099@gmail.com

443-769-7110

SB0626_FAV_MedChi_Birth Certs., Licenses, & ID Car

Uploaded by: Drew Vetter

Position: FAV



The Maryland State Medical Society
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www.medchi.org

Senate Finance Committee
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 25, 2026

Senate Bill 626 – *Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards – Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)*
POSITION: SUPPORT

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the largest physician organization in Maryland, **supports** Senate Bill 626.

Senate Bill 626 updates Maryland’s vital records and identity documentation processes to allow individuals to amend the sex designation on birth certificates and related identification documents to match their gender identity, and to include an “unspecified or another” designation. This bill advances patient-centered care by aligning state policy with established medical understanding of gender identity and reducing unnecessary barriers that can impede access to essential services, including health care, employment, education, and travel.

The American Medical Association (AMA), the nation’s largest association of physicians, affirms that individuals should be able to determine their gender identity and sex designation on government documents. The AMA has also recognized that outdated binary sex markers on birth certificates can inadvertently contribute to stigma and discrimination for transgender, nonbinary, and intersex persons, and supports policies that remove or broaden such designations to reflect contemporary medical understanding.

MedChi supports this legislation, consistent with the AMA’s policy. Aligning official documentation with an individual’s lived identity can improve mental health outcomes, reduce stigma, and promote health equity. Importantly, policies like Senate Bill 626 allow physicians, patients, and families to focus on individual health and well-being without creating administrative obstacles tied to outdated document categories.

MedChi urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 626.

For more information call:

Andrew G. Vetter
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman
Christine K. Krone
410-244-7000

WWH Testimony on SB 626.pdf

Uploaded by: Elizabeth Pinolini

Position: FAV

BEFORE THE MARYLAND SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Senator Pamela Beidle, Chair
Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 0626:
“Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards – Sex Designation
(Birth Certificate Modernization Act)”

February 23, 2026

Testimony of Elizabeth J. Pinolini, Staff Attorney, Whitman-Walker Health

Whitman-Walker Health offers these comments in support of Senate Bill 0626, Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards – Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act). We ask that the Committee issue a **favorable** report on this legislation, which aims to improve the lives of Marylanders by facilitating better access to accurate birth certificates, promoting accuracy and inclusivity with an “X” gender designation, and ensuring parents of all identities may change their name on a child’s birth certificate.

By way of background, Whitman-Walker Health (“WWH”) is a nonprofit, Federally Qualified Health Center rooted in community and dedicated to improving the lives of vulnerable communities. We offer primary medical and HIV specialty care; mental health and addiction treatment services; dental care; medical adherence case management; testing and prevention services for HIV and sexually transmitted infections; and pro bono legal services to residents of the greater Washington, DC area, including Marylanders. WWH has a special focus on serving individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ and those who are living with HIV, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation. We offer direct legal services and provide representation on a wide range of issues, including discrimination in employment and health care; federal, state, and local public benefit programs; Social Security disability insurance; immigration; medical confidentiality; estate planning and healthcare powers of attorney; and name changes and updating the name and gender designation on identity documents for transgender, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming individuals. The work of WWH Legal Services is critical to the health center’s mission of providing comprehensive, integrated health care and related services to people living with HIV, the LGBTQ+ communities, and others who rely on WWH for their healthcare needs.

Since 2012, WWH Legal Services has assisted 2,828 transgender individuals, including 774 Marylanders, with filing for legal name change and with updating the name and gender designation on their government-issued identity documents. Our experience with this work has demonstrated a clear need for people to have easier access to accurate identity documents. State-issued documents have become particularly crucial as the Federal government no longer permits an individual to change the gender designation on their Social Security record or passport.

When a transgender individual is required to provide identity documents with the “wrong name” or gender, they are likely to be outed as transgender and subjected to widespread discrimination. As shown by the 2023 Maryland Trans Survey focused exclusively on Maryland residents, 41% of respondents had been fired from or denied a job; 31% were unemployed; 21% earned less than \$35,000 in annual household income; and 23% reported a major financial crisis leading to bankruptcy or inability to pay bills within the prior year.¹ The barriers caused by inaccurate documents are very real; and yet, more than a third (37%) of Marylanders surveyed had no IDs or records with their chosen name, and more than half (51%) had no IDs or records with the correct gender.²

These experiences are in line with national trends, as the 2022 U.S. Trans Survey similarly found that 34% of respondents were experiencing poverty with an unemployment rate of 18%; 11% reported being fired, forced to resign, or laid off because of their gender identity or expression; and 30% experienced homelessness in their lifetime.³ 22% of all respondents reported being verbally harassed, assaulted, asked to leave, or denied services after showing an ID with a name or gender that did not match their presentation, but nearly half (48%) of respondents had no ID listing their chosen name, and more than half (59%) had no ID listing the correct gender.⁴

The Birth Certificate Modernization Act (“BCMA”) will directly help to address these issues by ensuring that anyone born in Maryland can access an accurate birth certificate. The current process requires either a court order or medical certification signed by a licensed health care practitioner. It is unreasonable to expect a layperson to pursue a court order for the sole purpose of updating their birth certificate, and obtaining medical certification presents its own barriers.

1. Requiring medical certification presupposes access to gender-affirming care.
 - a. Transgender individuals face discrimination in accessing healthcare, and the Maryland Trans Survey revealed that nearly a third (32.5%) of respondents did not have a primary healthcare provider.
 - b. Access to medical care is predicated on having health insurance. For many individuals, insurance is tied to their employment, and transgender individuals face significantly higher rates of unemployment. While Marketplace plans may be available, more and more people are struggling to afford coverage without the

¹ Pease, M.V., Taylor, S., Blinder, L., Clements, Z.A., & Galupo, M.P. (Mar. 2024). *Initial Findings from the Maryland Trans Survey*. Trans Maryland, <https://transmaryland.org/findings2024>.

² *Id.*

³ James, S.E., Herman, J.L., Durso, L.E., & Heng-Lehtinen, R. (2024). *Early Insights: A Report of the 2022 U.S. Transgender Survey*. National Center for Transgender Equality, Washington, DC, https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/2022%20USTS%20Early%20Insights%20Report_FINAL.pdf.

⁴ *Id.*

enhanced premium tax credits (“PTCs”) first made available under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. The Urban Institute has estimated that, as a result of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act and the Marketplace Integrity and Affordability rule released by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, 7.3 million fewer people will receive subsidized Marketplace coverage in 2026.⁵ Without the enhanced PTCs, it is projected that 4.8 million more people will be uninsured in 2026, representing an incredible 21% increase in the overall uninsured population.⁶

- c. The availability of gender-affirming care itself is at risk. The Department of Health and Human Services issued proposed rules⁷ in December 2025, that aim to bar hospitals from providing gender-affirming care to youth by withholding Medicaid and Medicare funds and prohibiting state Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program plans from using federal funding for gender-affirming care. Within Maryland, the currently pending House Bill 0679, Health Occupations – Cross-Sex Hormone Therapy for Minors,⁸ would make it a felony offense, punishable by life imprisonment, for any healthcare provider to provide hormone therapy to treat gender dysphoria in youth. Although focused on minors, these actions signal a larger effort to curtail the availability of gender-affirming care.
2. Even where an individual has access to gender-affirming care, only certain providers are qualified to sign the medical certification. A physician licensed under Title 14 of the Health Occupations Article may sign the form, but a physician’s assistant, licensed under Title 15 and capable of prescribing the required “treatment appropriate for the individual, based on generally accepted medical standards,” may not. The requirements under Title 19 are substantially similar for a certified social worker license and a certified social worker – clinical license, but only the latter can sign the form. This presents an additional barrier for individuals born in Maryland but living elsewhere, as their healthcare provider’s qualifications will not necessarily align with Maryland’s.
3. It is not an effective use of a provider’s time. It detracts from their ability to provide care to other patients experiencing active medical need when someone is required to schedule an appointment for the sole purpose of having a form signed.

⁵ Urban Institute, *4.8 Million People Will Lose Coverage in 2026 If Enhanced Premium Tax Credits Expire*, (Sept. 17, 2025), <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/48-million-people-will-lose-coverage-2026-if-enhanced-premium-tax-credits>.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Medicare and Medicaid Programs; Hospital Condition of Participation: Prohibiting Sex-Rejecting Procedures for Children, 90 Fed. Reg. 59463 (Dec. 19, 2025) (to be codified at 43 C.F.R. pt. 482), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/12/19/2025-23465/medicare-and-medicaid-programs-hospital-condition-of-participation-prohibiting-sex-rejecting>.

⁸ House Bill 0679, 2026 Gen. Assemb., Reg. Sess. (Md. 2026), <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb0679?ys=2026RS>.

4. The validity of an individual’s identity as a transgender person cannot not be tied to medical care. The requirement for medical certification delegitimizes people who do not wish to pursue medical interventions, and it furthers a highly damaging narrative that there are certain steps that an individual must take to be considered transgender.

Among identity documents, birth certificates are particularly important, and it is crucial to ensure that every single person can obtain an accurate record. They serve a vital function as proof of citizenship and are necessary in many different contexts. A birth certificate can be used to establish employment authorization for the purpose of completing a Form I-9 when starting a new job. An individual needs to prove citizenship or qualified immigration status when applying for federal student loans, and federal housing programs likewise require proof of citizenship or a birth certificate.

Given that transgender individuals are likely to face discrimination in areas such as employment or housing, the BCMA is an opportunity for Maryland to protect its residents at a time when they are facing challenges at the federal level. Under current Department of State policy, the Passport Agency will only issue a passport “with an M or F sex marker that matches the customer’s biological sex at birth.”⁹ A birth certificate is thus the only way for a transgender individual to show gender-affirming proof of citizenship. For individuals born in Maryland but living in a state that does not allow updates to a license or ID, their birth certificate is truly their only option.

A state that acts to protect its most vulnerable citizens is also an attractive state to prospective residents. Based on research by the Movement Advancement Project, since November 2024, an incredible 84% of transgender and nonbinary people have made significant life decisions in response to LGBTQ-related politics or laws.¹⁰ Nearly one in ten (9%) of transgender adults took the considerable step of moving to a different state, and, given that the survey covered a relatively short time frame of November 2024 to June 2025, this is a remarkable impact.¹¹ Among those who relocated, 92% cited LGBTQ-related legal protections as a top issue.¹²

⁹ Dep’t of State, *Sex Marker in Passports*, <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/passport-help/sex-marker.html> (last visited Feb. 23, 2026) (“The White House issued Executive Order 14168 “Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government” on January 20, 2025. Under the executive order, we no longer issue U.S. passports or Consular Reports of Birth Abroad (CRBAs) with an X marker. We only issue a passport with an M or F sex marker that matches the customer’s biological sex at birth. On November 6, 2025, the U.S. Supreme Court stayed the preliminary injunction issued in June by the U.S. District Court for Massachusetts in *Orr v. Trump*. As a result, we are only issuing passports reflecting sex at birth and will not honor attestations requesting a preferred sex marker.”)

¹⁰ Movement Advancement Project, *New Survey Reveals Dramatic Changes for LGBTQ Adults Since November 2024*, <https://www.mapresearch.org/2025-norc-survey-report> (last visited Feb. 23, 2026).

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Id.*

The BCMA would bring Maryland Department of Health policy into alignment with a growing number of states. As it currently stands, 14 states allow an individual to amend a birth certificate through an administrative process without requiring documentation from a healthcare provider,¹³ and the lack of medical certification does not create room for abuses, as the proposed legislation specifically requires that any request for a new birth certificate be made under penalty of perjury. The gender-neutral “X” designation offered by the proposed legislation would similarly have Maryland join 16 states, plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, in modernizing its policy.¹⁴ As an alternative, the “X” designation provides a more accurate option for individuals who do not readily identify with either “male” or “female” designations, and it offers increased privacy for those who wish not to disclose their gender on their identification.

Importantly, there is no legitimate government reason to require medical certification to update the gender designation on a birth certificate. Maryland has already empowered residents to self-attest to the gender designation on a license or ID, and Maryland-born individuals must be treated with respect according to their gender identity under existing nondiscrimination laws.

The improvements offered by the BCMA are however not limited to transgender individuals. Current Maryland law does not provide a clear process for amending the name of a parent on a child’s birth certificate. People change their names for a wide range of reasons unrelated to gender, from marriage and divorce to being the victim of domestic violence or stalking. The BCMA provides that a new birth certificate can be issued, without reference to any prior name, once a court of competent jurisdiction issues an order indicating that the name of a parent listed on a birth record has been changed. Parents are required to prove parentage in many situations, such as seeking medical care or communicating with schools, and the BCMA provides this important protection for families.

Obtaining accurate identity documents is a matter of providing equality, dignity, safety, and meaningful access to government services. Whitman-Walker Health applauds the many efforts made by the State of Maryland to protect LGBTQ+ individuals, and we have seen firsthand the positive impact of such changes on Marylanders everywhere. We strongly support the passage of this legislation and urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 0626.

We thank you for the opportunity to share our experience.

¹³ Movement Advancement Project, *Identity Document Laws and Policies*, https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/identity_document_laws (last accessed Feb. 23, 2026) (showing that California, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Colorado, New Mexico and Washington do not require provider certification to update a birth certificate).

¹⁴ *Id.* (showing that the same states, along with Connecticut, Utah, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, offer an “X” gender designation in addition to “M” or “F”).



WHITMAN-WALKER
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We see you.

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EmilyShaw_SB0626_Favorable_2026_0225_Finance.pdf

Uploaded by: Emily Shaw

Position: FAV

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

February 25, 2026

Chair Beidle and esteemed members of the Finance Committee:

My name is Emily Shaw and my pronouns are she/her. I'm a resident of Montgomery County, wife, and parent. As someone who knows how critical having accurate official documents can be for accessing services and rights, I believe it is discriminatory and unfair to hinder people from correcting their government documentation to match their identity. I therefore strongly support SB0626 and am seeking your committee's favorable report without amendments.

As someone who works in data management, I've had a view into how our official personally identifying information can help or harm us unexpectedly. Even small documentation differences - a name that has an accented letter in one place but not another, an inconsistently recorded compound last name - can result in lost applications, delayed benefits, and lost time. When the documentation difference is more substantial, as is the case where a parent or birth certificate holder has changed their name or public gender presentation, the consequences can be much more serious. My transgender friends, colleagues and neighbors can face substantial obstacles when they can't easily obtain accurate birth certificates for their children or themselves.

In Montgomery County, in order for a parent to register their child for school they are asked to show a birth certificate. The birth certificate confirms both their child's age and the child's relationship to their parent, enabling the county to link the child's district residency status to their parent's. It is possible to find a way around using a birth certificate through additional cost and legal process. But clearly, the birth certificate is the central form of proof of belonging of the child to the parent, and all the resources and benefits that come with that relationship.

Meanwhile, for the individual owning the birth certificate, that document is also our country's fundamental statement of their American citizenship. For people who change their name or documented gender, there are increasingly serious consequences for having mismatched identity documents. Having an inaccurate birth certificate can cause serious complications in hiring. Nothing highlights this danger better than the SAVE Act, currently before the US Senate. If made law, it will bar people across the US from voting unless they show proof of citizenship - which, if you lack a passport, will be a driver's license plus birth certificate. Mismatched birth certificate information in this case will cause the loss of a fundamental right.

Bureaucratic records and the systems that hold them have a significant impact on the daily practice of our lives. Marylanders deserve a clear way to update to their birth certificates in order to prevent the serious consequences of inaccuracies in this key official document. I respectfully ask for a favorable report on S0626 -the Birth Certificate Modernization Act- from the Finance Committee.

EzraTowne_SB0626_Favorable_2026_0223 (FIN).pdf

Uploaded by: Ezra Towne

Position: FAV

**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

SB626_LOS_HH_Birth Certificates.pdf

Uploaded by: Helene Hedian

Position: FAV

TO: The Honorable Pam Beidle, Chair
Finance Committee

FROM: Helene F. Hedian, MD

SB626
Favorable

DATE: February 25, 2026

RE: SB626 – Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards – Sex Designation

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of the Birth Certificate Modernization Act (**SB 626**).

I am an internal medicine physician at Johns Hopkins who has personally cared for hundreds of transgender and nonbinary patients in the Baltimore region and beyond. The views expressed in this letter are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of the institution.

SB626 would directly help my patients in several ways:

1. As you know, many transgender and nonbinary people change their legal name during the course of pursuing gender affirmation. For those who are parents, SB 626 would allow amendment of their children's birth certificates to reflect their own (the parents') current legal name. Without this, it is challenging for transgender parents to legally prove that they are related to their own children.
2. In addition, transgender and nonbinary people may change their legal gender marker on identification documents such as a Maryland driver's license, and they may seek to amend the gender marker on their birth certificate, to ensure that all of their administrative documentation is in agreement. SB 626 would allow transgender people to self-identify the gender to be placed on their amended birth certificate, removing an outdated requirement for attestation by a medical professional. This self-attestation will be made under penalty of perjury, ensuring that this process is not undertaken lightly. This change would bring Maryland into alignment with the 14 other states which already allow self-identification of gender identity on birth certificates: California, Idaho, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington state.
3. It clarifies that the X gender marker – which is already an option for Maryland state identification cards – is also valid for Maryland birth certificates. Maryland would join the ranks of 16 other states and DC which currently allow the X gender maker identification on birth certificates: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, Washington state, and Washington DC.

Passing this bill will significantly ease the burden of accessing accurate administrative documents for the transgender and nonbinary community. In addition, it honors the dignity and right to privacy for this community. I urge you to issue a **favorable** report on the Birth Certificate Modernization Act (**SB 626**).

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Best Regards,



Helene F. Hedian, MD

Ishai Barnoy - Testimony in favor of SB 626.pdf

Uploaded by: Ishai Barnoy

Position: FAV

**Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable
SB 0626 – The Birth Certificate Modernization Act**

February 23, 2026

Hello, my name is Ishai Barnoy and I'm a constituent from Baltimore City.

I am writing **in support** of **SB 0626 – The Birth Certificate Modernization Act**.

I am a married person and a parent and an immigrant and a friend of people who have changed their names throughout their lives, some of whom are transgender. For all of these reasons, I realize the hardship and confusion involved in handling name changes in legal records and being recognized at critical moments for the simple fact of being true to one's identity.

I believe that this act will help Marylanders by providing a consistent way to change their names on their children's birth certificates, a fair way for transgender Marylanders to correctly identify gender markers on their documents, and reduce the amount of paperwork and confusion involved in the process of changing one's name overall.

I'd like to add that, in a time when it seems like so many parts of this nation are carrying out what seems like an erasure and genocide of transgender people, even here in Maryland where transgender youth have seen a significantly reduced access to gender affirming care, any effort to allow transgender people to live more genuinely, securely, and freely is absolutely necessary.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Ishai Barnoy

240-888-6461
ishaiarnoy@gmail.com
2705 Montebello Terrace,
Baltimore, MD 21214

SB 626 - Senate - FAV .pdf

Uploaded by: Jennifer Mercer

Position: FAV



BILL NUMBER: SB 626

TITLE: Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

COMMITTEE: Finance

HEARING DATE: February 25, 2026

POSITION: Favorable

Reproductive Justice Maryland Action supports Senate Bill 626 in keeping with our mission to champion reproductive justice as a fundamental human right for all Marylanders. We believe that everyone deserves the freedom to make informed decisions about their bodies, health, and futures, free from discrimination, coercion, and barriers. This includes the freedom to live without regard to oppressive and harmful notions of gender.

Throughout history, human societies have had differing notions about the necessary attributes and roles ascribed to individuals based on whether they appear to be male or female. There have always been individuals who did not experience fitting neatly into the category they were assigned at birth. While they have always been with us, mainstream American society has only recently begun to recognize their existence, much less to acknowledge the harm of traditional ideas of gender and how these ideas constrain the lives of all people.

In this moment in particular, SB 626 represents an opportunity for Maryland to stand firm against the federal government's all-out assault on transgender rights. Since the first day of the new presidential administration, we have seen the federal government attempt to erase the very existence of transgender and gender non-conforming individuals. All references to transgender and gender non-conforming people have systemically been scrubbed from federal programs at every government agency. This has been done to communicate the administration's message of intolerance to transgender and gender non-conforming Americans. We can and must take the opposite stance in Maryland.

SB 626 contains several important provisions related to birth certificates. It will allow parents to have their identities reflected accurately on their children's birth certificates, thereby facilitating the exercise of their parental rights and responsibilities. It will also ensure that someone is not outed as transgender or gender non-conforming due to a notation on their birth certificate indicating it has been amended. The experience of being outed can result in anything from awkwardness to being murdered in a hate crime. Sadly, transgender and gender non-conforming people, especially those of color, face a high risk of physical and sexual violence.¹ Any legitimate public interest served in ensuring that an "amended" notation appears on someone's birth certificate does not outweigh the very real risk of harm that it could cause.

SB 626 will not solve the problem of the federal administration's outright hostility towards transgender and gender non-conforming people, but it is a meaningful step that Maryland can take in this crucial moment. Something as simple as having one's driver's license or identification card reflect their true identity can be a lifeline in these dark times for transgender and gender non-conforming Marylanders. Reproductive Justice Maryland Action is proud to support Senate Bill 626 and urges a favorable report.

¹ McLellan, Cortney, et al. "Global Burden of Violence against Transgender and Gender-Diverse Adults." *JAMA Network Open*, vol. 9, no. 1, 21 Jan. 2026, p. e2552953, jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2844133?utm_source=chatgpt.com, <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2025.52953>. Accessed 22 Feb. 2026.

FAVORABLE HB1589_SB0626 Birth Certificate Moderni

Uploaded by: Jeremy Browning

Position: FAV



**Maryland Commission
on LGBTQIA+ Affairs**

Bill Title: Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

Bill Number(s): [HB1589/SB0626](#)

Position: FAVORABLE

Date: February 23, 2026

Submitted by: Jeremy Browning, Director of the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs

To:

Senate Finance Committee

The Hon. Pamela Beidle, Chair
The Hon. Antonio Hayes, Vice Chair

Testimony on behalf of the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs:

The Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs, created by the Maryland General Assembly, works to serve LGBTQIA+ Marylanders by galvanizing community voices, researching and addressing challenges, and advocating for policies that advance equity and inclusion. The Commission envisions a Maryland where all LGBTQIA+ people can live full and authentic lives. As a vital resource, the Commission collaborates with public officials, agencies, and community partners to ensure the rights and dignity of LGBTQIA+ Marylanders are protected and respected.

On behalf of the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs, we strongly support House Bill 1589/Senate Bill 626, the Birth Certificate Modernization Act. This bill is a top priority for the Commission and represents a crucial step toward ensuring dignity, equity, and inclusion for transgender, nonbinary, and intersex individuals in Maryland.

This bill addresses long-standing barriers by streamlining processes for amending sex designations on birth certificates, licenses, and identification cards. It removes medically unnecessary and burdensome requirements, such as proof of surgery or other medical interventions, that many individuals cannot access or do not want. These requirements also place unnecessary administrative demands on an already strained healthcare system, requiring providers to spend valuable time completing paperwork rather than delivering care. By

[Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs](#)

100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032

simplifying this process and allowing self-attestation under penalty of perjury, the bill aligns Maryland with best practices and creates a consistent standard across state agencies.

Importantly, the Birth Certificate Modernization Act will also reduce administrative burden and costs for the State. By eliminating unnecessary clinical visits solely for documentation, the bill reduces avoidable Medicaid expenditures and streamlines agency workflows. In addition, the legislation allows existing forms to continue to be used, minimizing implementation and printing costs.

House Bill 1589/Senate Bill 626 also introduces an option to list “X” for sex designations, which is vital for Marylanders who do not identify within the traditional binary framework. Maryland would join other jurisdictions that provide this option and further demonstrate the State’s commitment to equitable and modern identity systems.

This legislation reflects careful collaboration and broad support. Sponsors and advocates worked closely with the Maryland Department of Health and the Motor Vehicle Administration to ensure the bill is operationally sound and responsive to agency needs. The bill is also supported by a wide coalition of community organizations across the state, reflecting strong and diverse stakeholder backing.

Beyond the procedural benefits, accurate identity documents are essential to daily life. When identification does not match a person’s identity, individuals face barriers in employment, housing, education, travel, and access to services. These mismatches can expose people to discrimination, stigma, and safety risks. Removing unnecessary barriers to accurate documentation reduces stress, improves mental health outcomes, and allows Marylanders to fully participate in the workforce, the economy, and civic life.

The Commission’s recently released [2026 Maryland LGBTQIA+ Community Needs Assessment Preliminary Findings Report](#) further underscores the need for this legislation. Our statewide survey found that transgender and nonbinary respondents face disproportionate barriers navigating identity documents, which directly affect access to employment, housing, health care, and personal safety. Nearly one-quarter of respondents reported changing their legal name while living in Maryland, and many described the process as difficult and burdensome. The report specifically recommends simplifying and standardizing gender marker and name change processes and reducing unnecessary documentation requirements. House Bill 1589/Senate Bill 626 directly advances these evidence-based recommendations and responds to the lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ Marylanders.

Maryland’s progress in advancing LGBTQIA+ equality is measurable and data-driven. According to the [Movement Advancement Project](#), a national think tank that tracks LGBTQIA+ policies across all 50 states, Maryland’s overall policy score increased from 72 percent in January 2023 to approximately 88 percent as of February 2026. During that time, protections related to sexual

orientation increased from 67 percent to 87 percent, and gender identity policy scores rose from 77 percent to 88 percent. These gains reflect the leadership of the Moore-Miller Administration, the continued partnership of the General Assembly, the LGBTQ+ Legislative Caucus, the tireless work of community advocates, and the Commission's ongoing efforts to assess needs, recommend solutions, and track outcomes.

Passage of the Birth Certificate Modernization Act would further increase Maryland's overall score by 0.75 points, bringing the state to approximately 89 percent of possible points. This progress is not symbolic. It reflects real improvements in safety, access, and quality of life for transgender Marylanders and strengthens Maryland's position as a national leader in inclusive policy.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a favorable report for House Bill 1589 and Senate Bill 626.

References

1. **Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs.** (2026). *2026 Maryland LGBTQIA+ Community Needs Assessment: Preliminary Findings Report*. Crownsville, MD: Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs.
<https://goci.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2026/02/2026-MDLGBTQIA-Community-Needs-Assessment-Preliminary-Findings-Report.pdf>
2. **Movement Advancement Project (MAP).** (2026). *Equality Maps: State Policy Tally for Maryland*. Retrieved February 2026, from
https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality_maps/profile_state/MD

SB626-favorable-John Ford.pdf

Uploaded by: John Ford

Position: FAV

Dear members of the Finance Committee:

I am a Baltimore City resident of District 46, community association leader, workforce development civil servant, and organizational psychology practitioner. I have close personal friends currently injured by binary status quo, and I recently became a father of a child whose sex at birth was thankfully compatible with the current legal environment but (that being the luck of the draw) whose future relationship to gender is still unknown. My own is complex enough. I strongly urge a favorable report on SB 626.

The BCMA is common sense. It will allow parents whose names have changed to prove their relationships to their own children. It will reduce administrative burdens, increase individual liberties, cut State costs, and apply consistency across State agencies. It is not radical; it will bring Maryland into line with 13 other states for self-attestation of gender (under penalty of perjury), and 16 states (plus D.C. and Puerto Rico) that allow X gender markers for those for whom male and female do not adequately apply.

There is nothing in this bill about school sports, fairness to woman athletes, or incarcerated people, or to change any medical standards of care. All of those are bad faith distractions.

For these reasons and for my basic spiritual belief as a Unitarian Universalist in the inherent dignity of all people, I once again urge a favorable report on SB0626.

Thank you again for your time,

John Preston Ford
529 S East Ave, Baltimore, MD 21224

Senate Bill 626 Favorable One Pasadena 2026.pdf

Uploaded by: John Jasen

Position: FAV

Finance Committee
Senate Bill 626
Favorable

Honorable Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and Members of the Finance Committee;

We, the Steering Committee of the neighborhood group One Pasadena: Building a Safe and Inclusive Community, ask that you give Senate Bill 626 a favorable report.

Senate Bill 626 would make it easier for people to have their names and genders changed on their children's birth certificates. Transgender people are often harassed and threatened in Pasadena, and some people here have even tried to get some transgender people fired. Since transgender people need to provide their children's birth certificates for school, school administrators find out that they're trans. This puts them at more risk, and puts their children at risk as well. We're also concerned that a transgender parent having a different name and gender on their child's birth certificate than is on their identification card would make it harder for them to leave the country with their child during a time when it's imperative that they have that option for their safety. Senate Bill 626 provides a simple and low-cost way to make these changes.

Please show your support for the safety and well-being of transgender people by voting in favor of Senate Bill 626. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
The One Pasadena Steering Committee
Pasadena, Maryland

Testimony on Senate Bill 626 – Favorable.pdf

Uploaded by: Kaelin Delaney

Position: FAV

Testimony on Senate Bill 626 – Favorable

Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

February 23, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kaelin Delaney, and I am a resident and homeowner in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. I am writing in support of Senate Bill 626 (Birth Certificate Modernization Act).

There are many reasons someone may need to update their birth certificate and related state documents (like drivers licenses), from marriage, adoption, name changes, and unintentional errors in initial filing. Currently, having multiple competing birth certificates on record with different or redacted information can cause confusion when trying to apply for documents later.

This legislation would improve the process for people like me, someone who is going to get married within the next few years and will have a resulting name change in the process. I also know other people who have had to jump through a lot of hoops to update information on their birth certificate for a variety of reasons and found the process very difficult and the outcome (having multiple copies of the same thing on file) concerning and frustrating. The current process increases the likelihood of administrative errors, increasing government expense through additional administrative actions, paperwork, and fixes.

Improving this process would help move the full state towards better, more modern standards around updating your documentation and likely save both government staff and Maryland residents time and headaches.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a **favorable report on SB626**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,
Kaelin Delaney
Upper Marlboro, MD
20772
delaney.kaelin@gmail.com

SB 626 - Birth Certificate Modernization, Support-

Uploaded by: Kari Alperovitz-Bichell

Position: FAV



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Support- SB 626

Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

TO: Senator Pam Beidle, Chair and members of the Finance Committee and
Senator Will Smith, jr, Chair and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee.
FROM: Kari Alperovitz-Bichell, MD, MPH
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland Health Care
DATE: February 25, 2026

My name is Kari Alperovitz-Bichell, MD, MPH. I reside in Annapolis in District 30a. But, I am representing myself, as a physician and a person of faith. I am also representing the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland, a faith-based organization that advocates for legislation in Maryland that furthers Unitarian Universalist values. Our UU faith calls us to affirm the inherent worth and dignity of all people, so we promote legislation that recognizes every person's innate and inextinguishable value.

We urge you to support **SB 626 - The Birth Certificate Modernization Act.**

This bill has several functions that are vitally important, particularly to transgender Marylanders and their children.

This bill will enable transgender parents to prove they are related to their own children after they have been granted an order of legal name change through the Maryland Courts. Consequently, these children will have the protection afforded by having two legal parents.

This bill will also allow Transgender Marylanders to have a gender marker of "X" on their birth certificates. This is critical for intersex individuals (people born with a combination of male and female physical traits) as well as non-binary and gender-non-conforming individuals. The bill would allow our citizens to align their Maryland documents with their other documents, including current US passports and documents from other states. Note that X markers are allowed on US passports, and on documents issued by 16 other states plus the District of Columbia - although the Trump administration has recently suspended issuing any *new* passports with either a gender change or an X marker.

UULM-MD c/o UU Church of Annapolis 333 Dubois Road Annapolis, MD 21401 410-266-8044,

www.uulmmd.org info@uulmmd.org www.facebook.com/uulmmd [www.Twitter.com/uulmmd](https://www.twitter.com/uulmmd)

The bill will ease the cost and logistical burdens of obtaining accurate and matching documents for the transgender community, which is also vitally important in many circumstances, including in obtaining employment and interacting with law enforcement, and it greatly protects against harassment. While this bill will benefit only a small percentage of Marylanders, it is crucial for those individuals. We cannot deny them this legal pathway simply because they do not make up a majority constituency. Their worth and dignity are equally deserving of protection.

Therefore, the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland urges you for a Favorable Report on **SB 626**.

Respectfully submitted,
Kari Alperovitz-Bichell, MD, MPH
1936 Severn Grove Road
Annapolis MD, 21401

UULM-MD c/o UU Church of Annapolis 333 Dubois Road Annapolis, MD 21401 410-266-8044,

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SB626_FAV_Stewart.pdf

Uploaded by: Kate Stewart

Position: FAV



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

KATE STEWART
COUNCILMEMBER
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

February 25, 2026

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Finance Committee

FROM: Kate Stewart
Montgomery County Councilmember, District 4

RE: Senate Bill 626, *Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)*
Support

My name is Kate Stewart and I serve as the Montgomery County Councilmember for District 4. Today, I am writing on behalf of myself in support of Senate Bill 626, *Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)*.

This legislation would clarify that an “X” marker is permitted on Maryland certificates of birth, enable transgender parents to prove they are related to their own children after they have been granted an order of legal name change through the Maryland Courts, ensure the validity of existing birth certificates, ease the administrative burden of accessing accurate documents for the transgender community, and require attestation of gender on birth certificates to be made under penalty of perjury.

Given the current national political climate and the federal administration, legislation such as this is essential to pass at the state level to protect members of our LGBTQ+ community, especially transgender and gender nonconforming individuals. The federal administration has brought forth numerous executive orders targeting these communities, including prohibiting transgender individuals from serving openly in the military, restricting young people from accessing gender-affirming care, and keeping teachers from treating students with respect and dignity,

The Honorable Pamela Beidle

Re: Senate Bill 626, *Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)*

February 25, 2026

Page 2

denying the reality of these students' lives and causing immeasurable suffering. Senate Bill 626 will aid in solidifying these students' and other individuals' lived experiences and personal dignity by ensuring their legal documents properly reflect their gender identity.

The executive orders on the federal level and similar laws in other states are directed attacks on valued members of our community. We cannot let our transgender and gender nonconforming neighbors stand alone in the face of such uncertainty on the federal level. I urge you to support this bill to preserve the dignity and humanity each individual has a right to in their own identity.

Favorable SB626 K. York 02.23.26.pdf

Uploaded by: Katie York

Position: FAV

IN SUPPORT OF Senate Bill #626: Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards- Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

I am writing today to express my strong support for SB626- Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards- Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act).

This bill removes outdated obstacles that currently hinder transgender Marylanders from obtaining updated, accurate birth certificates with respect to names and gender markers. At a time when the rights and wellbeing of transgender and nonbinary individuals face growing challenges at the federal level, Maryland has a responsibility to provide clear protections within the state. This bill is an important step toward fulfilling this responsibility by protecting the rights, dignity, and wellbeing of nonbinary and transgender individuals in Maryland. For transgender and nonbinary individuals, having identification that accurately reflects their identity is essential for safety.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 626.

Sincerely,
Katie York

Edgewood, Maryland

YorkForHarford@gmail.com

SB0626_KellenSweeney_favorable.pdf

Uploaded by: Kellen Sweeney

Position: FAV

SB 626 SUPPORT

Kellen Sweeney
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Baltimore, MD 21212
MD Legislative District 41

SB 626 SUPPORT

Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards – Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

Senate Finance Committee / Judicial Proceedings Committee

Wednesday, February 25, 2026 at 1:00 pm

Dear Chair Beidle, Chair Smith, and members of the Senate Finance and Judicial Proceedings Committees,

My name is Kellen Sweeney. I live in Baltimore City with my husband and five-year-old child. I work in public health when I am not busy with my favorite job – being Teagan’s mama. **I am in support of Senate Bill 626.**

I am also transgender. The name I was given at birth by my parents always felt uncomfortable to me, because it was a girl’s name, and I didn’t feel like a girl. It felt like lying, and I didn’t want to lie. After many years in therapy and in conversation with friends and family, in 2022, I filed to legally change my name and gender marker – a change which has greatly reduced that source of distress and helped me to be a happier and healthier person. My mom even helped pick my name (again).

All Marylanders should have access to accurate government-issued identification documents. These are used in countless financial, health care, benefits, and other transactions. As a parent, I regularly need to produce documents proving my own identity and my relationship to my child.

Government-issued identification works differently for me simply because I am transgender. Because I legally changed my first name after giving birth to my child, the name on my driver’s license did not match the name on my child’s birth certificate, meaning I could not use their birth certificate alone to prove my parentage for official purposes like applying for their passport.

There is no clear process for remediating the situation. I could not find guidance on the state Division of Vital Records website for how to correct the name of a parent due to a name change;

I tried to make an appointment, but it was not clear which type of appointment I needed to request. I did not trust I would be able to complete this process by mail, given the lack of clarity, so I just picked an appointment type, took a day off of work, and hoped that whoever I end up talking to in person would be willing to find a creative solution to navigate this scenario. On my first attempt, they were not. I went home, made a different appointment type for another day, took ANOTHER day off of work, and was able to complete the process on my second attempt.

Accessing core government services like accurate identification documents should not be left to individual staff discretion and should not require taking multiple days off of work for a basic update for which I had all of the requisite legal documentation, including a valid court order.

By contrast, my ability to obtain an accurate driver's license was simple. The MVA website clearly indicated that the option was available, how to make the appropriate appointment, and what documentation I needed to bring. The MVA staff were trained on the process, the systems were updated to collect and update the information for this scenario – it worked the way a common government service should. I could do it on my lunch break. This is because the General Assembly passed legislation to make those expectations clear to the agency.

You may wonder whether legislation is really required to do this. **I would not have been able to update my marriage certificate were it not for legislation passed by the General Assembly in 2022 (HB 369 / SB 377).** Despite the fact that this legislation had been passed, and the Maryland Judiciary had posted a form on their website to serve as affidavit required to request a name change, the staff in the Baltimore City courthouse simply refused to accept the documentation. I produced my court order, my other updated legal identification documents, and even a copy of the legislation. I spent 10+ hours at the courthouse over four different days. I was sent on a wild goose chase to the Civil division, Family division, even the magistrate's office. The marriage division manager simply refused to do it. Finally, I contacted the Attorney General's office asking what was their plan to comply with the statute. I got a call back within the hour, and my marriage license was updated the next day – because the General Assembly had made it clear that this was the law.

I wish it was not necessary to pass legislation to ensure that everyone would honor a court ordered name change. I wish we didn't live in a time where individual bureaucrats could decide they simply don't think another person should be able to change their name or gender and put those beliefs over the needs of the individuals they are meant to serve. Even when there is no ill intent, there can simply be confusion about what is or is not allowed and that is an unfair position for our state employees to be in. Transgender Marylanders exist, we will continue to be in a position where our documents do not match and we need to prove our identity, and everyone will benefit from having a clearer pathway to definitively proving identity, citizenship, and parentage.

I have heard the argument that a birth certificate should represent what was true at the time of birth. But a birth certificate is not simply a historical record – it is a document we must use to prove our identity, citizenship, and parentage for the duration of our lives. It is very difficult to navigate what should be routine transactions, like verifying eligibility for employment or enrolling one’s child in school, when these most basic identification documents do not match. Should I not be able to register my child for public school, because the name on my driver’s license does not match the name on their birth certificate? Why does it matter to a school administrator that I changed my name? Why are they in the position of determining the validity of my court order, or asking invasive questions about why the documents do not match, rather than simply being able to refer to an accurate government-issued identification document?

Furthermore, there are already circumstances in which a parent can change their name on their child’s birth certificate. If I got married and changed my last name after giving birth, rather than my first name, I could update my child’s birth certificate to reflect my new legal name. The process is simple and clearly described on the DVR website including what documentation to provide. **But because I am updating my first name, rather than my last name, I was turned away.** Why is it acceptable to modify the record of birth for a last name, but not a first name? **Does that seem right to you? Or does that seem like we are denying a minority of Marylanders reliable access to a service that we routinely provide to the majority?**

In conversations around this bill, I have heard some talk about respect for mothers. ***I* am a mother, and I did not feel respect when I was denied my request to have my own name on the birth certificate for the child I carried for 9 months.** As a mother, I am asking you: **The Senate should pass SB 626. Transgender Marylanders and their families deserve the same access to accurate government-issued identification as any other Marylanders.**

Birth certificate modernization support testimony.

Uploaded by: Kristopher Gebhard

Position: FAV



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

SB626_MoCo_Frey_FAV (GA26).pdf

Uploaded by: Leslie Frey

Position: FAV



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550

ANNAPOLIS: 240-777-8270

SB 626

DATE: February 25, 2026

SPONSOR: Senator Lam

ASSIGNED TO: Finance & Judicial Proceedings

CONTACT PERSON: Leslie Frey (leslie.frey@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: SUPPORT (Montgomery County Council)

Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

Senate Bill 626 repeals the requirement that a licensed health care practitioner determine that an individual's sex designation should be changed for the purposes of issuing a new birth certificate. Instead, an individual (or their parent, guardian, or legal representative) must make a written request, under penalty of perjury, to the Maryland Department of Health for a new birth certificate with a sex designation that differs from the original birth certificate. When issuing a new birth certificate, the Secretary of Health must allow an individual to designate the sex of the individual as female, male, or unspecified or another. If an individual indicates unspecified or another, the Secretary must ensure that the new birth certificate displays an "X" in the location that indicates the individual's sex. The bill alters the sex designation option of "other" to "another" on an application for a license, identification card, or moped operator's permit. Furthermore, the bill alters provisions regarding a new birth certificate issued due to a name change of a parent listed on a birth certificate and makes other technical changes related to gendered language.

Senate Bill 626 would enable transgender parents to prove they are related to their own children after they have been granted an order of legal name change through the Maryland Courts, ensure the validity of existing birth certificates, and ease the administrative burden of accessing accurate documents for the transgender community, resulting in increased accessibility to necessary services, healthcare, and public accommodations that align with their gender identity. Given the current national political climate, legislation such as this is essential to pass at the State level to protect members of our LGBTQ+ community, especially transgender and gender nonconforming individuals.

Senate Bill 626 will aid in solidifying individuals' lived experiences and personal dignity by ensuring their legal documents properly reflect their gender identity. For the foregoing reasons, Montgomery County respectfully requests a favorable Committee report on Senate Bill 626.

SB 626 - CLS Support - Birth Cert Mod Act .pdf

Uploaded by: Lisa Sarro

Position: FAV



Jessica A. Quincosa, Esq.
Executive Director

Kayla Williams-Campbell, Esq.
Deputy Director

Lisa Sarro, Esq.
Director of Litigation &
Advocacy

SB 626

**Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards – Sex
Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)**

**Finance Committee Hearing
February 25, 2026**

Position: FAVORABLE

To the Honorable Members of the Finance Committee:

[Community Legal Services](#) (CLS) is a nonprofit legal services provider dedicated to ensuring equitable access to justice and due process of law for Maryland's most under-represented populations. We strive to support, protect and advocate for the human rights of all individuals and families. We strongly support passage of SB 626.

Maryland must step up to protect Marylanders whose rights and well-being are under attack at the federal level. This bill is an important step toward fulfilling this responsibility by protecting the rights, dignity, and wellbeing of nonbinary and transgender individuals in Maryland. Transgender and nonbinary individuals face significant barriers to full inclusion and equal treatment in society. One of the most critical issues is the mismatch between their legal documents—such as birth certificates, licenses and identification cards—and their gender identity. This bill helps address this issue by streamlining the process for changing gender markers and updating parents' names on the birth certificates of their children.

A birth certificate that does not reflect an individual's true gender or include the updated name of a parent's name on their child's birth certificate can create obstacles in numerous aspects of life, including healthcare, employment, and safety. Ensuring that nonbinary and transgender Marylanders may update birth certificates, IDs and licenses to reflect their gender identity is not just enabling a legal change—it is also a vital affirmation of their right to self-determination and their right to define themselves. The provision in this bill which prohibits updated birth certificates from reflecting that they were reissued or amended is critical to preserve privacy and prevent discrimination when individuals use their updated birth certificate for identification or when applying for jobs, a passport, or other uses.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report in SB 626 to advance this important legislation.

Please feel free to reach out to Jessica Quincosa, Executive Director, or Lisa Sarro, Director of Litigation & Advocacy, with any questions at quincosa@clspgc.org, and sarro@clspgc.org, respectively.

SB0626 2:25:26 Birth Certificate.pdf

Uploaded by: Lynn Mortoro

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB0626

Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

FAVORABLE

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

FROM: Lynn Mortoro, member of the Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network (MEPPN)

DATE: February 25, 2026

Dear Chair Senator Beidle, Vice Chair Senator Hayes and all members of the Senate Finance Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of this bill.

I am a retired registered nurse and am very much in favor of passing this very important bill.

I am also a member of the Episcopal Church.

The Church has strongly supported efforts to equalize care and to stop discrimination in the LGBTQ population. This would include those who identify as non-binary or transgender.

Everyone should have the freedom to be who they are and be able to live to that, especially in regards to their sexuality. In this society, it is vital that our documents match who we are.

The Church believes in “Support legislation banning practices that try to change people’s sexual orientation or force them to deny their gender identity.”

Being able to replace inaccurate documents with corrected and updated information is an affirmation to who they are and will allow people to function without potential discriminatory restrictions.

The Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network (MEPPN) requests a

FAVORABLE report

The Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network (MEPPN) is a ministry of The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland, The Episcopal Diocese of Washington, and The Delaware-Maryland Synod ELCA

TMD SB 626 2026 - Birth Certificate Modernization

Uploaded by: M Pease

Position: FAV



M Pease, M.S. (they/them)
Research Director
info@transmaryland.org

February 23, 2026

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Testimony of Trans Maryland – Research Unit

IN SUPPORT OF

Senate Bill #626: Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation
(Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

To the Chair, Vice Chair, and esteemed members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Trans Maryland is a multi-racial, multi-gender community power building organization for Maryland's trans community. Trans Maryland runs the state's largest name and gender marker change program and, since 2021, has collaborated with a team of researchers supported by funding from the University System of Maryland Wilson H. Elkins Professorship on a state-wide assessment of trans community experiences. Our [report on identity documents](#) found:

- Only **14.4%** of trans Marylanders had their correct gender on all IDs
- Individuals making **\$35,000 or less** annually and individuals with **disabilities** were significantly less likely to have their gender reflected on their ID documents

Our data highlight the importance of making accurate identity documents accessible to trans people in Maryland. The Birth Certificate Modernization Act streamlines administrative processes and removes unnecessary barriers faced by trans people in Maryland, particularly those with lower incomes and with disabilities, to obtaining accurate documentation. It also ensures that parents of trans youth and parents who have changed their name for any reason can obtain accurate birth certificates for their children.

From employment to education to healthcare, accurate identity documents are critical for so many areas of everyday life. These simple changes will help ensure more trans Marylanders can access documents that match who they are, with measurable impacts on safety and wellbeing for communities across our State.

For these reasons, we urge a **favorable report** on SB 626.

Testimony Supporting SB0626 022326.pdf

Uploaded by: Melinda Littell

Position: FAV

Testimony Supporting SB0626
Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation
(Birth Certificate Modernization Act)
FAVORABLE

February 23, 2026

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

I am writing to ask you to vote in support of Senate Bill 626 (SB0626), the Birth Certificate Modernization Act (BCMA). SB0626 would modernize Maryland's process for changing a gender marker on a birth certificate to be consistent with policies in other states across the country. At a time when rights of transgender individuals are under widespread attack, Maryland can take an important step through the Birth Certificate Modernization Act (BCMA) to support transgender individuals in their daily lives.

This bill will enable transgender parents to prove they are related to their own children after they have been granted an order of legal name change through the Maryland Courts. In addition, the bill removes gatekeeping to change the gender marker on transgender parents' own birth certificates and allows X markers on Maryland birth certificates. It would make the update process for birth certificates consistent with what has been in place since 2019 for Maryland driver's licenses and state IDs, allowing self-selection of gender in documents produced by the Motor Vehicle Administration and the State Board of Elections.

The bill would lift burdensome paperwork obligations from medical and mental health providers, allowing for more time to treat patients. There would no longer be a need to produce medical documentation, such as proof of surgery or other medical interventions, that many individuals cannot access or do not want. At the same time, the bill would save transgender Marylanders from having to make – and pay for – unnecessary healthcare appointments.

The transgender community would benefit in other ways from easing the cost and logistical burden of obtaining accurate and matching documents, such as in obtaining employment, interacting with law enforcement, and preventing harassment.

SB0626 does not amend existing state laws or policies regarding housing incarcerated transgender people or participation in school sports; it does not change medical standards of care for transgender health for adults or youth; or allow individuals to change the gender designation on their birth certificates for fraudulent or criminal purposes. However, it does help LGBTQIA+ individuals feel supported in their community.

For these reasons, please return a favorable report on SB0626, the BCMA.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melinda Littell
Arnold, D33C

MEnglish BCMA testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael English

Position: FAV

February 25, 2026
Michael English
Silver Spring, MD, 20910

TESTIMONY ON SB 626 - POSITION: FAVORABLE

Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

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

FROM: Your Full Name

My name is Michael English. I am a resident of District 20. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB 626, Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

Thank you for agreeing to hear my testimony,

As a cisgender male I can only speak to this issue so well, but with my best friend, and at this point found sister, being a trans woman, the issue of trans rights has become very important to me, and I have found myself more and more involved in advocacy on the matter, which brings me to the need for this bill.

There is currently no consistent way to request an update of their own, or their child's birth certificate, and trans people in particular face varying degrees of need for medical records and signatures for updates. At a time when trans rights are under attack, this cannot stand.

The sorely needed legislation would make it easier to update the documents, and in turn, easier allow trans parents to prove they are related to their own children, a barrier most people might not even think to consider, but which can upend lives in an emergency situation. It would also lower the burden on overworked medical workers, cut Medicaid costs by simplifying compliance, and bring Maryland in line with 13 other states that already allow attestation of gender for birth certificates.

Little things add up, we need to help make this safe haven as welcoming and as helpful as possible to trans people in this time of persecution.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB 462.

Thank you

Michael English
8005 13th Street
Unit 304
Silver Spring, MD
20910

FAVORABLE-SB 626 NFG.pdf

Uploaded by: Natali Fani-González

Position: FAV

NATALI FANI-GONZÁLEZ
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL PRESIDENT
COUNCILMEMBER, DISTRICT 6
100 Maryland Ave
Rockville, MD 20850

CHAIR
Economic Development Committee (ECON)

MEMBER
Planning, Housing and Parks Committee (PHP)



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

February 23, 2026

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Montgomery County Council, I write in strong support of the Birth Certificate Modernization Act (SB 626). This legislation will allow parents who have legally changed their names to update their information on their children's birth certificates, ensuring family integrity and reducing unnecessary administrative barriers. It also standardizes gender marker updates across state agencies, enabling transgender Marylanders to self-attest under penalty of perjury, streamlining processes and reducing burdens on medical providers.

This community already faces significant challenges including navigating complex healthcare systems, dealing with insurance paperwork, managing specialized treatment side effects, and coping with family or social rejection. Adding bureaucratic obstacles only compounds these hardships. In today's political climate, where federal hostility toward transgender rights is escalating, Maryland must lead by example and provide clarity, compassion, and consistency.

SB 626 will reduce costs, ease the strain on healthcare providers, and bring Maryland in line with best practices nationwide. Most importantly, it will help families feel supported and connected during some of life's most challenging moments. This legislation is about dignity, unity, and compassion. I respectfully urge you to advance SB 626.

Sincerely,

Natali Fani-González
Montgomery County Council President
Councilmember, District 6
Chair, Economic Development Committee

Birth Certificate Modernization Act 2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Nicole Hollywood

Position: FAV

SHORE PRIDE ALLIANCE LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

Bill: **SB626 Birth Certificate Modernization Act**

Organization: Shore Pride Alliance., PO Box 5107, Salisbury Maryland 21802

Submitted by: Nicole Hollywood, Board Member

Position: **FAVORABLE**

This testimony in FAVOR of the Birth Certificate Modernization Act is being submitted on behalf of Shore Pride Alliance, formerly PFLAG Salisbury, an organization dedicated to supporting, educating, and advocating for LGBTQIA+ people and their families.

Gender identity is a person's conception of being male, female, both, fluid, or neither, which may or may not be the same as what their sex was assigned at birth with 5.1% of adults under 30 identify as transgender or nonbinary.

Changing gender markers on legal documents is important and life affirming for transgender, non-binary, and intersex individuals because it allows them to accurately reflect their gender identity, which can significantly improve their mental health, reduce the risk of discrimination, and affirm their self-perception, essentially providing a vital step towards living authentically as themselves.

Conversely, **having an inaccurate gender marker can lead to challenges in accessing services, potential safety concerns, and feelings of invalidation.**

Because accurate and consistent gender markers on identity documents help individuals identifying under the transgender umbrella gain access to public spaces and resources it is crucial for them to be able to fully participate in all aspects of society. Further, legal gender marker and name change is associated with lower negative emotional response to gender-based mistreatment and improved mental health outcomes among trans populations.

Here in Maryland, the Maryland Commission for LGBTQIA+ Affairs conducted the first ever comprehensive state-wide needs assessment of LGBTQIA+ Marylanders. With approximately 1300 respondents, we found that nearly 25% of respondents changed their legal name while living in Maryland with many reporting the process as difficult citing barriers to obtaining updated identity documents, affecting access to employment, housing, health care, and safety.

The bill under consideration will streamline processes and remove unnecessary and burdensome requirements. Further, **these actions are consistent with the recommendations of major medical, advocacy, and legal organizations.**

This bill will also help transgender parents prove they are related to their own children after they have been granted an order of legal name change through the Maryland Courts and ease the administrative burden of accessing accurate documents for the transgender community, particularly low-income transgender people.

References

Brown, A. (2022). About 5% of young adults in the U.S. say their gender is different from their sex assigned at birth. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/06/07/about-5-of-young-adults-in-the-u-s-say-their-gender-is-different-from-their-sex-assigned-at-birth/>

Fontanari et al., (2020). Gender affirmation is associated with transgender and gender nonbinary youth mental health improvement LGBT Health, 7 (5) 237-247, <https://doi.org/10.1089/lgbt.2019.0046>

Hollywood, N. et al. (2026). Preliminary Findings of the Maryland LGBTQIA+ Needs Assessment. Maryland Commission for LGBTQIA+ Affairs.

Restar, A., Jin, H., Breslow, A., Reisner, S. L., Mimiaga, M., Cahill, S., & Hughto, J. M. W. (2020). Legal gender marker and name change is associated with lower negative emotional response to gender-based mistreatment and improve mental health outcomes among trans populations. SSM - population health, 11, 100595. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2020.100595>

Scheim, et al. (2025). Legal gender recognition and the health of transgender and gender diverse people: A systematic review and meta-analysis. Social Science and Medicine, 378. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.118147>

WeAreCASA_FAV_SB626.pdf

Uploaded by: Ninfa Amador-Hernandez

Position: FAV

**Testimony in SUPPORT for SB0626
Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate
Modernization Act)**

February 23rd, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and Members of the Committee,

We Are CASA strongly supports SB0626 - the Birth Certificate Modernization Act. We Are CASA is one of Maryland's largest immigrant serving and advocacy organizations, working statewide to strengthen communities and improve the quality of life for working class, Black, Latino/a/e, Afro-descendant, Indigenous, and immigrant families. Through community organizing, direct services, and policy advocacy, We Are CASA partners with tens of thousands of Marylanders to remove barriers that limit dignity, inclusion, and economic security.

For the families We Are CASA serves, accurate identity documents are essential. Birth certificates are often required to access health care, enroll in school, secure employment and housing, obtain state identification or driver's licenses, open bank accounts, and travel. When these documents do not reflect a person's lived identity, individuals can face confusion, discrimination, and unnecessary harm. These barriers disproportionately impact low income, immigrant, and marginalized communities.

SB0626 modernizes Maryland law by updating the process for amending birth certificates. The bills allow individuals to update the sex designation on their birth certificate through a simple affirmation process, remove outdated medical requirements, and recognize gender markers beyond the binary. These changes reflect current best practices and align with policies already in place for state identification and driver's licenses.

For working-class and immigrant families who already navigate complex systems, language barriers, and fear of discrimination, this legislation reduces unnecessary obstacles. It creates a more respectful and efficient process that protects privacy and affirms the dignity of transgender and non-binary Marylanders.

By modernizing birth certificate laws, Maryland can improve consistency across state systems and promote fairness for all residents. For the communities We Are CASA serves, accurate documentation is often the gateway to safety, stability, and full participation in public life.

For these reasons, We Are CASA respectfully urges a favorable report on SB0626 and HB1589, the Birth Certificate Modernization Act.

In support of SB0626.pdf

Uploaded by: Rhys Frazier

Position: FAV

Re: [SB0626](#) Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

Honorable members of the Maryland General Assembly Finance Committee,

My name is Rhys Frazier and I am a Virginia-born resident of Sabillasville, Maryland. I am writing to you in support of [SB0626](#): Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act).

Many of the attacks on transgender Americans have focused on erasing our legal status, including by preventing us from having identification documents that align with the way we present ourselves and move through the world. Identification documents that don't reflect the gender we present as, such as driver's licenses and birth certificates, "out" us in administrative situations where our gender should be a non-issue and expose us to increased discrimination and a higher likelihood of transphobic violence.

[SB0626](#)'s requirement that a birth certificates amended for sex and name change "may not be marked "amended"; or show in its face that a change has been made to: (1) a sex designation; or (2) If applicable, a name" would both help protect the private medical information of Maryland-born transgender people, and remove a way that their medical records could be used to identify and target them.

I strongly urge the committee to vote in favor of [SB0626](#) Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act). Fewer than half of the states in the US haven't enacted legislation hostile to their transgender community. Maryland could be one of the few to proactively pass legislation that protects their transgender citizens and becomes a safe harbor for those fleeing hostile states.

Sincerely,

Rhys Frazier

14545 Brown Road,

Sabillasvile, MD21780

SB0626-Birth Cert Modernization Act (MCCR-FAV).pdf

Uploaded by: S. Spencer Dove

Position: FAV



State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

Respect...Integrity...Effective Communication

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**Education and
Outreach Director**
Candice Crenshaw

February 25, 2026

**Senate Bill 626 – Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards – Sex
Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)**
Position: Support

Dear Chairperson Beidle, Vice Chairperson Hayes, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee; as well as Chairperson Smith, Vice Chairperson Waldstreicher, and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee:

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (“MCCR”; “The Commission”) is the State agency responsible for enforcing Maryland’s laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, state contracts, commercial leasing, and health services based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, physical and mental disability, source of income, and military status.

Senate Bill 626 modernizes the law to allow an individual – not their licensed health care practitioner – to make a written request under penalty of perjury to the Maryland Department of Health to update their birth certificate so it accurately reflects their sex designation if it differs from the original designation at birth. The bill directs the Secretary of Health to allow an individual to designate their sex as “female”, “male”, or “unspecified or another”. When selecting “unspecified or another”, the Secretary must ensure that the new birth certificate displays “X” in the location that indicates the individual’s sex.

The Commission strongly supports SB626 because the bill provides much needed relief for transgender, nonbinary, and intersex Marylanders who face decades old barriers that impede their right to self-determination and economic security. When the Fairness for All Marylanders Act became law in 2014, MCCR and other supporters knew that prohibiting discrimination based on an individual’s gender identity was just one step toward making Maryland more equitable and inclusive for all. The ability for an individual to update their birth certificate to accurately reflect their sex designation *without needing to pursue medically unnecessary and burdensome requirements* will markedly improve their ability to obtain a job, secure financing, and buy a home – all issues MCCR has seen within investigations into complaints alleging unlawful discrimination in employment and housing based on gender identity.

“Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination.”

William Donald Schaefer Tower, 6 Saint Paul Street, Suite 900, Baltimore, Maryland 21202-1631
Phone: 410-767-8600 · Toll Free: 1-800-637-6247 · Maryland Relay: 711 · Fax: 410-333-1841
Website: mccr.maryland.gov · E-Mail: mccr@maryland.gov

The pursuit of dignity, respect, and inclusion for transgender, nonbinary, and intersex Marylanders has been long. As previously noted, State law only began protecting an individual from unlawful discrimination based on gender identity in 2014. In 2019, State law allowed an individual to identify as female, male, or X on State-issued identification. In 2021, State law changed a court rule so that individuals could petition the court to change their name without needing to pay for an announcement in the local newspaper. And now in 2026, State law should be changed so that individuals can appropriately update their birth certificate – a vital record that impacts nearly every aspect of their life.

For these reasons, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights urges a favorable vote on SB626. Thank you for your time and consideration of the information contained in this letter. MCCR looks forward to the continued opportunity to work with you to promote and improve civil rights in Maryland.

TRAC - SB626 - Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Sam Williamson

Position: FAV



SB626, Birth Certificate Modernization Act
February 25, 2026
Support

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Finance Committee,

TRAC submits this testimony in favor of SB626, which would streamline procedures for amending sex on birth certificates and introduce a gender-neutral designation option. It would also strengthen protections that reduce the risk of discrimination and harassment by ensuring documents are issued as new, not amended.

TRAC is a Maryland-based and entirely trans-led coalition committed to ensuring that all transgender and gender expansive Marylanders can live safe and affirming lives. Our membership includes healthcare providers, attorneys, academics, organizers and other community members.

We support this bill emphatically because having one's birth certificate align with one's identity, appearance, and life experience is important for one's livelihood and wellbeing. Members of our community need their identification documents to match their appearance and identity, especially in 2026 as more individuals will rely on state documentation for safe and accessible travel and daily life needs. The 94,000 trans and nonbinary Marylanders¹ need safe and accurate identity documents to access various identification cards, medical services, and other important opportunities that are basic human rights.

An accurate birth certificate is necessary to prove one's identity, age, and citizenship status. It is an important document for obtaining a driver's license, social security card, and passport, enrolling in school, opening a bank account, applying for jobs and filling out requisite paperwork, renting and buying homes, driving and renting cars, traveling by airplane, entering secure buildings, applying for government benefits (including Medicaid, food stamps, and social security), joining the military, claiming insurance or pension benefits, and getting a marriage license.

For anyone, these processes are stressful, complex and frustrating. Imagine fearing harassment, rejection, or worse because your birth certificate doesn't align with your identity or presentation. That's a whole lot of living that is obstructed when a bureaucrat, employee, or officer notices a person's gender marker does not match the person's identity or physical appearance and gives them a hard time about it. Indeed, according to the most recent U.S. Trans Survey, 22% of transgender people have been "verbally harassed, assaulted, asked to leave a location, or denied

¹ Meyer, Christopher. "We Can Do More to Support Maryland's 500,000+ LGBTQ+ Residents." *Maryland Center on Economic Policy*, 28 Feb. 2024, mdeconomy.org/we-can-do-more-to-support-marylands-500000-lgbtq-residents/.

services when they have shown someone an ID with a name or gender that did not match their presentation.”²

Trans and nonbinary Marylanders deserve to access necessary services with accurate documents and without harassment or denial of entry. We want to show our IDs without fear of retribution. We want to live free. Let Maryland be the champion for LGBTQ+ rights, joining states like California, New York, Pennsylvania, Arkansas, Vermont, and D.C.³ into the only future that matters, one where we are all equal and valued for what we are - human beings.

We respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB626.

Sincerely,

The Trans Rights Advocacy Coalition

² Sandy E. James *et al.*, 2022 U.S. Trans Survey Early Insights, p. 22 (Feb. 2024), https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/2022%20USTS%20Early%20Insights%20Report_FINAL.pdf.

³ Migdon, Brooke. “Here Are the States Where You Can (and Cannot) Change Your Gender Designation on Official Documents.” *The Hill*, The Hill, 15 Sept. 2022, thehill.com/changing-america/respect/diversity-inclusion/3507206-here-are-the-states-where-you-can-and-cannot-change-your-gender-designation-on-official-documents/.

Testimony Support SB626.pdf

Uploaded by: Shiowei Cheng

Position: FAV

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.

MVLS S. Francis Testimony in Support SB626 Birth C

Uploaded by: Susan Francis

Position: FAV



JUSTICE FOR ALL

MARYLAND SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE
TESTIMONY OF MARYLAND VOLUNTEER LAWYERS SERVICE

IN SUPPORT OF SB626 – BIRTH CERTIFICATION MODERNIZATION ACT

February 25, 2026

Susan Francis
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Angela Russell
Rebecca Sheppard
Syma Ahmad Siddiqui
Sheila J. Stewart
Emily J. Wilson

Chair Beidle and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 626.

My name is Susan Francis, and I am the Executive Director at the Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service (MVLS). MVLS is the oldest and largest provider of pro bono civil legal services to low-income Marylanders, and our mission is to reduce barriers to justice through free civil legal help, community engagement, and advocacy for equitable laws. Since MVLS’ founding in 1981, our statewide panel of over 1,700 volunteers has provided free legal services to over 115,000 Marylanders in a wide range of civil legal matters. In FY25, MVLS volunteers and staff lawyers provided legal services to 3,233 people across the state.

In our 45 years, we have assisted nearly 1,200 individuals with name changes, gender changes, birth certificate corrections, and other identification issues. Having accurate and current identification is critical to the basic needs that we’re all seeking to obtain including housing, employment, and accessing programs and benefits.

While accurate identification is essential to daily life, the process to obtaining those correct documents and records can be very challenging, particularly for individuals with limited income and resources. It is not uncommon that many of MVLS clients that receive legal help related to their identification don’t technically have a legal component, but they are unable to navigate the administrative barriers without having legal advocacy to get the issues resolved.

As noted, MVLS assists many low-income individuals throughout the state with identification and birth certificate issues, because it is such a substantial barrier. We particularly see identification and birth certificate issues regularly burdening Marylanders in our workforce development project, where having accurate identification is essential to employment opportunities, and in our Human Trafficking Prevention Project, where we assist many survivors

resolve their documentation and identification issues so that they may move forward with rebuilding their life by securing stable housing and employment.

I personally have assisted several clients with birth certificate issues and have seen first hand how challenging the administrative process can be. Even as an attorney, I have had to navigate challenging and frustrating barriers that took a significant amount of time and effort to resolve the issue for my clients.

One client I helped was Ms. W who needed a copy of her birth certificate and was given a flat out no by the Division of Vital Records. The ultimate resolution required my involvement, engaging with the Attorney General's Office, and filing a name change for her. In the interim, she struggled with not having sufficient identification for trying to rent a better situated apartment for her and to receive her medical care, as she had a number of chronic health issues. During the months it took to resolve the matter for her, she was forced to carry a letter from me explaining the situation so that she could have her basic needs met.

The Birth Certificate Modernization Act would streamline what is currently a burdensome process to ensure that birth certificates remain accurate. SB626 would make it easier for parents to change their names on their children's birth certificate, for individuals to change their gender marker on their birth certificate, and permit the use of a "X" gender marker on a birth certificate. It will bring the practice in alignment with existing processes for MVA and state licenses which were updated in 2019, reducing confusion and inconsistencies amongst government agencies.

For these reasons, we **strongly support SB 626** and ask you to do the same. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Testimony-Birth-Certificate-Modernization.pdf

Uploaded by: Susan Gerb

Position: FAV

I'm am testifying to support a FAVORABLE report on SB 0626, the Birth Certificate Modernization Act

I run a support group for transgender adults, and am a witness to the struggles faced by transgender Marylanders trying to live an authentic life. There are numerous hassles associated with gender transition. Some are necessary, but others are state-imposed and can easily be eliminated.

One of these easily fixable issues is the requirement to present documentation from a healthcare provider for a simple change to gender on a Maryland birth certificate. It creates problems for several reasons:

1. It places a burden on healthcare providers and patients. Healthcare providers are drawn away from their important job of providing healthcare, and patients are required to make an appointment to get their documentation produced. These appointments may not be covered by insurance, incurring an expense on people who have so many other financial obligations.
2. The rules as to who may provide this documentation and what form it must take are confusing and, in many cases, arbitrary. Some types of providers are permitted to give it, others aren't. If a patient's provider is not one of those types, they have to go on an expensive and time-consuming hunt to find one who is. Providers themselves do not have the time to dig into arcane rules to obtain this information, so there are occasions when what they provide is insufficient.
3. The rules only allow for male and female as genders, which forces non-binary Marylanders, who identify neither as a male or female, to misgender themselves on government documentation.
4. Transgender people who have not obtained transition-related medical care are frozen out of having accurate documentation. There are many reasons why someone might transition without medical care. Some are not healthy enough to take hormones or undergo any of the gender confirming surgeries, and others are simply happy with their bodies as they are. This violates the principle of equal protection.
5. State-sponsored requirements that transgender people provide medical documentation to have their transitions recognized perpetuates the public misconception that being trans is a disease and that transitioning gender is something transgender people cannot be trusted to do on their own and must be supervised. Like anyone else, transgender people do not need medical permission to be members of their gender.
6. Perhaps most importantly, it is an unnecessary bureaucratic step. The doctor's input adds nothing to the information received by the state. Doctors don't know transgender people's gender any better than the state does. The doctor just takes the transgender person's word for it.

For these reasons, I hope you will take the steps in your power to eliminate this requirement by giving SB0626 a FAVORABLE report.

Takoma Park 2026 - SB 626 FAV - Birth Certificate

Uploaded by: Talisha Searcy

Position: FAV



CITY TAKOMA OF PARK MARYLAND

Senate Bill 626 - Data Privacy - Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

Finance Committee, February 25, 2026

Support

The City of Takoma Park supports SB 626, otherwise known as the Birth Certificate Modernization Act. This bill makes it easier for parents to update information on their children's state birth certificates and streamlines and modernizes the process for updating gender markers on one's own birth certificate.

The City of Takoma Park is committed to being a welcoming and inclusive community where all residents experience a sense of safety and belonging. A current priority for our City Council is to support and affirm LGBTQ+ individuals and families, particularly transgender and gender diverse people.

Right now, Maryland does not have a consistent system for changing a parent's name on their child's birth certificate. This issue doesn't just affect transgender parents—it can also create difficulties for anyone who needs to change their name for important reasons, such as people seeking to protect themselves after surviving abuse. If implemented, this bill will enable parents who have legally changed their names to prove that they are related to their children.

This bill will also ensure that all state agencies follow the same process for updating the gender marker on a person's identification documents. Gender identity is treated as a protected class through our State's nondiscrimination laws. In Montgomery County's LGBTQ+ Community Survey in 2022, over half of the respondents who tried to change their name and/or gender marker on a birth certificate found it difficult.

Making our systems work better and more easily for our most vulnerable residents just makes sense. This legislation makes our administrative processes simpler for our residents as well as our governmental agencies. The City of Takoma Park supports common sense changes that ease burdens on our transgender and gender diverse community members. We support the enactment of this bill into law and urge a favorable vote.

City Contact: Talisha Searcy, Mayor

talishas@takomaparkmd.gov

SB 626 Letter - Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Taylor Dickerson

Position: FAV



February 23, 2026

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RE: SB 626 Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

Secretary

Kim Sanschagrín JD, Ph.D.

Position: SUPPORT

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Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and Members of the Committee:

Representatives-at-large

Deborah Williams, Psy.D.
Laurie Donze, Ph.D.

The Maryland Psychological Association, (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral level psychologists throughout the state, asks the Finance Committee to report FAVORABLY on SB 626.

Representative to APA Council

Mary Fernandes, Ph.D.

Requiring a medical professional affidavit for updating a sex designation on birth certificates is an outdated practice not in alignment with established treatment standards for trans and nonbinary (TNB) communities. Conducting an assessment and completing paperwork to confirm what is already the lived reality of TNB people is neither clinically necessary nor an effective use of the limited time available to clinicians to meet the mental health needs of communities across the state.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Communications

Beatrice Gerry, Ph.D.

Removing this requirement and allowing self-attestation (as is already the case for other State driver's licenses and identification cards) will reduce the financial and administrative burden of these unnecessary visits on clinicians, clients, insurance companies, and the State's Medicaid and Medicare programs. Moreover, allowing parents who have received a name change for any reason to update their information on their child's birth certificate is an important way to ensure parents can demonstrate their legal relationship with their children, easing their ability to navigate a variety of systems and institutions, including healthcare.

Diversity

Mindy Milstein, Ph.D.

Early Career Psychologist

Danielle Wexler, Ph.D.

These changes address important gaps in access and equity with regard to birth certificates and will allow psychologists to focus more of their time providing critical psychological services to clients.

Educational Affairs

Shalena Wade, Ph.D.

Ethics

LaShaun Williams, Psy.D.

We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 626. If we can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact MPA's Legislative Chair, Dr. Stephanie Olarte, Ph.D. at mpalegislativcommittee@gmail.com

Legislative

Stephanie Olarte, Ph.D.

Respectfully submitted,

Membership

Dana O'Brien, Ph.D.

Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.
Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.
President

Stephanie Olarte, Ph.D.
Stephanie Olarte, Ph.D.
Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

Past Presidents' Council

Steve Sobelman, Ph.D.

cc: Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs

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Paul C. Berman, Ph.D.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Taylor Dickerson

SB 626 - SWASC - BCMA - FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: UM SWASC

Position: FAV

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.¹ 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.² **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.³

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.”⁴

¹ 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

² 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>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs. (2026, February 9). *2026 Maryland LGBTQIA+ community needs assessment: Preliminary findings report* [Report]. State of Maryland. <https://goc.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.⁵ 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.

⁵ Movement Advancement Project. (2025). *Equality Maps: Identity document laws and policies*. October 27, 2025.
https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/identity_documents

FAV SB626 BCMA.pdf

Uploaded by: VL Buzdygon

Position: FAV

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

As a transgender nonbinary Marylander, I urge a FAVORABLE report on SB 626.

SB 626 allows 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, and prohibit changed birth certificates to show signs of being amended.

SB 626 increases the safety, life, liberty, and happiness of ALL Marylanders, including cisgender residents. Being able to fix errors on official documentation with no undue burden is a right that belongs to all of us.

Cisgender Americans have also faced issues when confronted with the same policies that hinder trans people. In Arizona, a 14 year old cisgender boy, Laker Jackson was prohibited from playing on the boys basketball team at his school because of a birth certificate clerical error that listed his gender as female¹ He was told he was only eligible to play on the girls team at his school. Although the youth was able to get his birth certificate amended to change his listed gender to male, the state refused to let him play even when his birth certificate was amended.

The Birth Certificate Modernization Act will allow all Marylanders to identify themselves accurately in a time that the state of Maryland must move with urgency to ensure protections from federal attacks on voting, via the SAVE act, for transgender and cisgender citizens alike.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on SB 626.

¹ Cunningham, J. (2025, October 17). *Valley Teen Boy told he has to play on girls team because of error on birth certificate.* 12News. Retrieved December 15, 2025, from <https://www.12news.com/article/news/local/valley/valley-teen-boy-told-play-girls-team-because-of-error-birth-certificate/75-c40779ce-9f50-4dfc-8a19-1ba2bc8da9c5>

Berger SB 0626.pdf

Uploaded by: Zackary Berger

Position: FAV

Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable
SB 0626 Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex
Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

Finance Committee

February 23, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to offer favorable testimony in support of **SB 0626 Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)**.

I am a primary care physician who sees transgender and gender diverse patients. This legislation would straighten out inconsistencies in the approach of different state agencies to birth certificate changes. They would not involve any change to medical care. This would assist me, by reducing my workload in eliminating pointless gatekeeping, as well as assist my patients.

I urge the House Judiciary Committee to issue **a favorable report** on SB 0626.

Zackary Berger, MD, PhD
Baltimore, MD 21218

2026 SB0626 UNF.pdf

Uploaded by: Mathew Goldstein

Position: UNF



<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfU0l1WSdNHoXUz2uYdt4zf-ztmwuTz-rdKJ59WbJstj1Ylw/viewform>

February 25 2026

SB 0626 - UNF

Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act)

Dear Chair [Senator Pamela Beidle](#), Vice Chair [Antonio Hayes](#), and Members of the Finance Committee,

An infant has an identifiable biological sex based on possessing testes or ovaries as implied by genitalia, or as otherwise determined by medical examination, but does not yet have an identifiable gender identity. Biological sex should not be confused with gender identity which is a cognitive/psychological trait that sometimes conflicts with biological sex. This bill inappropriately allows people to unilaterally replace their biological sex with conflicting gender on the primary, and often only, official record of biological sex, thus corrupting the integrity of biological sex documentation.

Both biological sex and gender identity are important. Which takes priority when they conflict is context and details sensitive. For example, transgender women should not participate in a medical clinical trial for women to determine if a medication has a different impact on women than men. Biological sex dependent medical care, such as cervical smear tests or prostate exams, or biological sex-specific cancer referrals, may be omitted or misdirected as a result of mis-identifying biological sex. Medical lab results with biological sex correlations may be misinterpreted. We should be recording biological sex as accurately as we can, particularly for transgender individuals. Gender identity should not be allowed to displace biological sex as proposed by this bill.

Maryland law allows individuals to specify, and easily change, their gender identity on their Maryland ID to be F, M, or X, which is consistent with protecting the integrity of the recording of biological sex on birth certificates. It is unclear that there is a need for the state to document gender identity. Nevertheless, the Maryland ID is a more appropriate place for doing so than birth certificates. Most people with Differences of Sexual Development (DSD, about 1.7% of the population) are unambiguously male or female,

only about 0.02% people are not either male or female. To accommodate that 0.02% birth certificates could adopt a F, M, or X designations for biological sex. Since biological males can be born with female-like genitalia and internal testes which are not externally visible, the law should allow subsequent corrections in birth certificates, *with the approval of a licensed medical professional for the sole purpose of more accurately record medically confirmed biological sex* in contexts where there was ambiguity, or a mistake was made, without promoting a category error.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) recently banned the participation of transgender athletes in women's sports. They define a women as anyone who is currently assigned female on their birth certificate. Converting birth certificates from their primary role of identifying biological sex to instead identifying gender identity thusly functions as a concealed back door exit from continuing to segregate sports competitions by biological sex. Sporting competitions is one of the contexts where the usually substantial role of biological sex outweighs the often comparatively negligible role of conflicting gender identity.

Respectfully,
Mathew Goldstein
3838 Early Glow Ln
Bowie, MD

SB 626_HB 1589_ Certificates of Birth, Licenses,

Uploaded by: Trudy Tibbals

Position: UNF

SB 626/HB 1589: Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation (Birth Certificate Modernization Act): Please vote to **OPPOSE** this bill.

Dear Finance Committee:

I am writing to express my strong **opposition** to **SB 626/HB 1589**, the "Birth Certificate Modernization Act."

Birth certificates serve as foundational legal and historical records documenting biological facts at the time of birth, including sex as observed and recorded by medical professionals. Altering the process for changing or **issuing new certificates** based on self-identified sex designation **will undermine the accuracy, integrity, and reliability of these vital documents**. Such changes could create inconsistencies in official records used for identity verification, medical history, genealogy, legal proceedings, sports participation, and other critical purposes where biological sex is relevant.

Furthermore, expanding or modifying sex designation options on state-issued licenses, identification cards, and moped operator's permits to include vague categories like "Unspecified or Another" may complicate verification processes for law enforcement, travel, employment, age-restricted activities, and single-sex spaces or services. **These documents are meant to provide clear, factual identification, and introducing ambiguity could lead to confusion, fraud risks, or unintended consequences for public safety and privacy.**

While I respect individuals' rights to personal identity and expression, official government records should prioritize biological and medical accuracy over self-identification, especially when changes could affect third parties or longstanding legal standards. Maryland should maintain clear distinctions in these records rather than further blurring lines that impact many areas of life.

I urge the Committee to **give SB 626/HB 1589 an unfavorable report** and prevent its passage. Protecting the accuracy and purpose of birth certificates and identification documents is essential for the integrity of our state's records and the protection of all Marylanders.

Thank you for your consideration. I respectfully request that this message be entered into the record.

Sincerely,

Trudy Tibbals