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House Bill 1488 – Constitutional Language – Modernization

March 10, 2026

House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

Favorable

Esteemed Committee Members,

On behalf of the Office of the Secretary of State and as Secretary of State, I would like to respectfully express my strong support for HB1488, which amends the terminology in the Maryland Constitution to use gender-neutral language when referring to executive branch and legislative constitutional officers. The Constitutional Amendment also updates language in the Declaration of Rights.

HB 1488 applies to the constitutional officers, including the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, the Adjutant General, the Comptroller, the Treasurer, and the legislative presiding officers. Under the existing language of the Constitution, our current Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller, Maryland House Speaker Joseline Peña-Melnyk, Comptroller Brooke Lierman, Adjutant General Janeen Birckhead, and I are all referred to as “he”, “him”, “his”, and, “himself”. This language is contrary in our efforts to remove antiquated provisions that may create perceptions that may marginalize or make invisible individuals based on gender.

HB 1488 is an important and timely step forward to ensure our laws reflect our present-day world. The language that existed in our Constitution at the early inception of our nation and state is outdated and should be amended to embody the progress and gains we have made in America and Maryland in supporting the fundamental principles of equality, respect, and inclusivity. At least ten states have already adopted gender-neutral language in their constitution. As America is a work in progress, Maryland should not be left behind by letting stand provisions in our laws that are contrary to these principles.

As such and for the reasons set forth in my testimony, I respectfully urge your favorable vote HB 1488.