

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

March 30, 2026

Delegate Heather Bagnall, Chair, Delegate Bonnie Cullison, Vice-Chair, and esteemed members of the Health 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 support SB0626 - and ask for a favorable report with a critical amendment to the bill passed by the Senate.**

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 for adults. 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 and other entities that process needed identification documents.

As you know, SB0626 passed on the Senate Floor on March 23. The bill had two floor amendments before passage: one from Senator Lam, and one from Senator McKay. I accept Senator Lam's amendment, although I wish it wasn't necessary.

However, Senator McKay's amendment weakens the bill irreparably - by adding a birth information history record to be maintained by the Secretary of Health. This birth information history record creates a list of anyone who has updated their birth certificate gender marker - creating a dangerous dataset that can be used for unimagined purposes. For example, we have already seen what the current federal administration is willing to do to retrieve information about trans minors' and adults' medical history related to gender affirming care. **We simply cannot allow the state of Maryland to create even this theoretically sealed list - because we cannot count on anyone (including federal and state entities) not to use it maliciously.**

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 with amendment on SB0626 - the Birth Certificate Modernization Act - from the Health Committee.**

Sincerely,
Mx. Ezra Towne
District 18, Wheaton