



Maryland General Assembly  
Re: SB 0626

Dr. Kristopher Gebhard, PhD  
Soul Soil Healing LLC  
3600 Clipper Mill Rd Ste 221  
Baltimore, MD 21211

Dear Delegates,

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.

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 currently uses 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 resources** at every major life event. For safety of all those who change their birth certificate in this federal political climate, it is critical that the House **remove the "birth information history" amendment** that was erroneously added in the Senate.

**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, medically 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. **For minors, this requirement makes updates impossible**, due to the severe lack of gender-affirming care providers available. Further, this requirement takes providers away from providing care to those who really need our support. It is time for Maryland to align with the 14 other states that allow self-selection of gender markers on birth certificates.

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