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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 626**  
**Certificates of Birth, Licenses, and Identification Cards - Sex Designation**  
**(Birth Certificate Modernization Act)**  
*Health Committee*  
**April 1, 2026**

**Social Work Advocates for Social Change strongly supports SB 626 with amendments:** SWASC supports the bill as introduced but opposes the floor amendment added by the Senate to create a database of birth information histories of individuals who change their birth certificates under this title.

**SB 626 as passed by the Senate requires that a registry of every person who changes their sex designation on their birth certificate be kept in the Department of Health: this is a dangerous action to take against transgender Marylanders.** Under current law, as described in § 4-211(G) of this subtitle, the Department of Health already maintains records of previous birth certificates under seal; therefore, this amendment is redundant in preserving historical information. Further, having an additional database of identifying information of almost exclusively trans Marylanders presents significant risk to the privacy and safety of the community. Recent events have given reason to believe that such databases could be utilized in ways to facilitate unfair treatment of trans people. For example, last month, Kansas suspended the driver's licenses of every person who had gotten their gender marker corrected, thus immediately making it illegal for trans people to drive with their current, correct license. This amendment sets up a direct pathway for actions targeting all trans Marylanders at once, such as what happened in Kansas. **We strongly urge the House to remove this harmful amendment.**

**As originally drafted, 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> **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.<sup>3</sup>

**SB 626 supports the recommendations of Maryland’s Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs.** In its 2026 statewide community needs assessment, Maryland’s Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs recommends that Maryland “reduce administrative and cost barriers in name and gender marker changes” because these barriers impact “employment, housing, health care access, and safety.” The Commission specifically calls for the State to “simplify and standardize processes, reduce unnecessary documentation requirements, and ensure consistent implementation across agencies.”<sup>4</sup> SB 626 helps accomplish these recommendations by eliminating medical gatekeeping, adding an “X” option, and creating a process for trans parents to be accurately named on their child’s birth certificate.

**Numerous other states have created pathways for updated birth certificates for transgender individuals, and Maryland is falling behind each year the Birth Certificate Modernization Act languishes.** By modernizing our birth certificates through the passage of SB 626, Maryland will join 14 states that have updated their administrative processes to allow amendments to birth certificates without medical provider documentation, as well as 16 states and Washington D.C that allow “X” markers on birth certificates.<sup>5</sup> SB 626 also creates consistency across agencies, as Maryland has allowed residents to self-select their gender marker and select an “X” marker on their driver’s licenses and IDs without medical attestation since 2019.

**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 with amendments 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.*

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<sup>1</sup> 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](https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/2022%20USTS%20Early%20Insights%20Report_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> 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>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs. (2026, February 9). *2026 Maryland LGBTQIA+ community needs assessment: Preliminary findings report* [Report]. State of Maryland. <https://gocv.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2026/02/2026-Maryland-LGBTQIA-Community-Needs-Assessment-Preliminary-Findings-Report.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Movement Advancement Project. (2025). *Equality Maps: Identity document laws and policies*. October 27, 2025. [https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/identity\\_documents](https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/identity_documents)