

Favorable With Amendments:

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

April 1, 2026

Chair Bagnall and esteemed members of the Health Committee:

My name is Catherine Hill, and I am a resident of Montgomery County. I am a lecturer at George Washington University's Women's, Gender, and Sexualities Studies Department, where I teach gender, law, and public policy. It is with this background that I urge you to pass SB0626 favorably with amendments.

Everyone should be able to correct their government-issued documentation to match their identity. A birth certificate is a legal document, not a medical one. It is the foundation of establishing a legal identity as a citizen. At this historical moment in which transgender people are being targeted and slandered by religious extremists, protecting this vulnerable population is a top priority. The threat of violence against trans people is real, and it is everyone's responsibility to be a part of the solution.

With the removal of a harmful component to create a "database of birth information histories" that was added on the Senate floor, this bill will help a lot of Marylanders. I therefore strongly support SB0626 and am seeking your committee's favorable report with amendments.

The birth certificate is our country's fundamental statement of American citizenship and the building block for any form of identity documentation. 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 a birth certificate. Mismatched birth certificate information in this case will cause the loss of a fundamental right.

This bill, as originally written, would have created a valuable improvement for many people born in Maryland. However, the bill before you has had an extremely dangerous amendment

attached to it, which must be undone before passage. The amendment, which requires the creation of a "birth information history" file, is nothing more than an effort to create a registry for harassment and persecution. We have seen both historically and contemporaneously - in just this past year - how data collected on minority populations for ostensibly neutral reasons can be very quickly turned into a hunting license. In the past month, we have watched the [State of Kansas immediately invalidate hundreds of driver's licenses](#) held by transgender Kansans, because such a list was kept.

This Federal administration and organizations associated with it have routinely shown a willingness to take theoretically protected data and share it with whoever can help them achieve their extremist goals, whether it is legal or not to do so. We cannot guide the state to create a list of people who have changed their birth certificate information, as doing so will almost certainly make the people we seek to support targets. I strongly urge you to amend the bill you have before you to remove this harmful component.

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

Thank you for considering, and reconsidering, this bill. In Maryland, as in the rest of our country, the separation of church and state is fundamental to democracy. Further, a true democracy protects unpopular minorities against harassment and persecution.

With great respect,

Catherine Hill
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