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**LETTER OF SUPPORT
HOUSE BILL 1011**

March 4, 2026

Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and Members of the Committee:

We respectfully submit this testimony in support of House Bill 1011, establishing a Workgroup on Supporting Transgender and Gender Diverse Students. This legislation provides Maryland with the opportunity to ensure statewide consistency, constitutional compliance, and clarity in policies affecting students of the LGBTQ+ community. As advocates for the LGBTQ+ community in the General Assembly, we believe this bill will protect, strengthen, and secure rights for LGBTQ+ students. The benefits and effects of passing the proposed legislation will also create a positive and long-lasting change for all of Maryland's students.

LGBTQ+ students, specifically transgender and gender diverse youth, face significant challenges in schools including harassment, feeling unsafe due to bullying because of their gender expression, being denied the use of their chosen names and pronouns, and avoiding restrooms out of fear or discomfort. These barriers negatively impact their academic success and mental health.

Across Maryland, several districts have enacted a patchwork of policies to protect LGBTQ+ and transgender students. These policies implement state laws that prohibit discrimination based on gender identity, protect students from bullying and harassment, provide privacy protections, and permit participation in all aspects of student life consistent with students' gender identity.

While clear protections are provided to LGBTQ+ youth in some counties, they do so through different policy structures and levels of specificity. Although the policies are substantially similar, their differences may create inconsistent clarity for families, different levels of procedural transparency, uneven implementation across district lines, administrative inefficiency, and greater litigation exposure due to ambiguity.

Furthermore, the majority of Maryland counties do not have a specific policy regarding transgender and gender nonconforming students, contributing to an even more unequal policy landscape for these students. The LGBTQ



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Caucus believes that these students' protections should not depend on which county they live – all are deserving of policies that protect and uphold their dignity.

The Federal Fourth Circuit, whose precedents govern our Maryland schools, indicates that inclusive non-discrimination policies for LGBTQ+ youth are constitutionally defensible under Title IX, the Equal Protection Clause, and the First Amendment. These doctrines make clear that schools must ensure equal access and prevent foreseeable harm to vulnerable students.

By December 1, 2026, the workgroup would submit recommendations regarding statewide statutory and regulatory policies based on the workgroup findings to the State Department of Education, the Governor, and the General Assembly. By assessing the patchwork of protections at the local level, the group can work towards formulating a uniform policy for students, parents, teachers, and administrators to follow. A statewide workgroup composed of a broad range of stakeholders would ensure that issues for transgender and gender diverse students are carefully examined and that informed recommendations are developed to protect students in all counties. Maryland has both the legal authority and the moral responsibility to lead the way to progress for LGBTQ+ youth. House Bill 1011 ensures that every student, in every county, walks into a school that is safe, lawful, and truly equal under the Constitution for every student

Thank you for considering the bill's positive effects on the LGBTQ+ community. Please reach out to us regarding any additional questions or concerns on the bill. We appreciate your efforts in fostering community and furthering understanding for LGBTQ+ students.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kris Fair".

Delegate Kris Fair, Chair