

Gender-Inclusive Single-Occupancy Restrooms

WHY?

Senator Kagen | Delegate Solomon
SB 486 | HB 572

In 2019, 2020, & 2021 Baltimore City, The City of Salisbury, and Howard County passed gender inclusive single occupancy restroom laws.

- This bill, making single-occupancy restrooms in the state of Maryland clearly gender-inclusive, is one step towards fulfilling the commitment of making Maryland more inclusive of all, while also indicating that we are open for business!

It's about inclusivity and access to public accommodation.

- We know there are members of our community, including our trans and nonbinary neighbors, who may not be safe or feel comfortable while using a restroom with a "male" or "female" label.
- As a state, we should strive to create public accommodations that are accessible and inclusive for our whole community.
- Clear, gender-inclusive signage is one way to ensure equal access to public facilities. Example of gender-inclusive signage include: Restroom, Bathroom, Restroom w/Urinal, Bathroom w/Urinal

Public accommodations discrimination on the basis of gender identity is already illegal.

- The Fairness for All Marylanders Act (FAMA), passed at the state level in 2014, already prohibits gender-based discrimination in public accommodations. This includes single-occupancy restrooms. FAMA did not require changes to restroom signage, however.
- This bill brings single-occupancy restroom signage in line with anti-discrimination measures already on the books in Maryland.
- It also normalizes the idea that all members of the Maryland community—regardless of their gender identity—can use any publicly-accessible, single-occupancy restroom.

It brings Maryland in line with other jurisdictions

- Washington, D.C. passed the country's first law requiring gender-inclusive signage for single-stall restrooms across the District in 2006. Philadelphia's City Council passed the "Gender Neutral Bathroom Law" in 2016.
- These cities rely on tips from the public, via the municipal 311 system and social media hashtags, to do outreach and assist businesses in complying with the law.
- Nevada, Illinois, and Vermont (just to name a few other states) all have gender inclusive single-occupancy restroom signage laws.

It makes more restrooms available to the community as a whole.

- Gender-inclusive, single-occupancy restrooms benefit many people, including nursing parents, parents with children of a different gender, people who depend on caretakers or assistants, and people who need a private, quiet place to pray.

Why are we focusing on this when there are other concerns?

- Access to bathrooms can be a safety issue for members of our community who are transgender, genderqueer, and nonbinary. Members of these communities face harassment, intimidation, and even violence when attempting to access public accommodations.
- Bringing posted signage outside of single-occupancy restrooms in line with anti-discrimination measures already on the books is one way to remove ambiguity around who can use public accommodations in the state of Maryland. At its core, this policy is about moving the state of Maryland forward.

Who should I contact if I have more questions?

- E-mail Lee Blinder, Executive Director Trans Maryland at Lee@transmaryland.org

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