

The Frederick Center Board of Directors supports HB 1147, Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings – Single–Occupancy Public Restrooms –Availability (The Accessible to All Act).

Please see the following letter of support.

The Frederick Center
PO Box 3231
Frederick, MD 21705-3231

February 26,, 2020

Dear Chairman Davis, Chair of the House Economic Matters Committee:

The Frederick Center is privileged to have the opportunity to review HB 1147, Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings – Single–Occupancy Public Restrooms – Availability. This legislation would require that certain single-occupancy restrooms be made available to persons of any gender identity and that any associated signage be gender-inclusive.

The Frederick Center is a 501c3 organization that serves the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) community and its allies. Its vision is to be the leading organization for LGBTQ resources and advocacy in central Maryland. The Frederick Center exists to support and advocate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) people and our families so we thrive, are accepted and affirmed, in the broader community of Frederick, Maryland.

Under the 2014 Fairness for All Marylanders Act (FAMA), Maryland greatly expanded protections for transgender individuals which included the use of locker rooms and other public accommodations. In keeping with the intent of FAMA, HB 1147, Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings – Single–Occupancy Public Restrooms – Availability, seeks to reduce the stigma and violence experienced by the transgender community in public restrooms. According to the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE), there are at least 1.4 million transgender people in the United states. In a 2015 NCTE survey of 27,715 transgender individuals, 31% of respondents reported having experienced some form of mistreatment in places of public accommodation. A recent study conducted by the Human Rights Campaign involving transgender and gender expansive students between the ages of 13 and 17 from all 50 states and the District of Columbia found that 58% cannot use the restroom that best reflects their gender because they do not feel safe using them (HRC 2018 LGBTQ Youth Report). Many transgender people refrain from using the restroom when out in public in an effort to avoid conflict or danger.

Out of consideration for the mental and physical health, as well as the equitable treatment of transgender individuals, The Frederick Center strongly urges a favorable report on HB 1147, Places of Public Accommodation and Public Buildings – Single–Occupancy Public Restrooms – Availability.

Sincerely,

The Frederick Center Board members