

**Testimony Concerning HB 1010**  
**“Health Care Facilities – Discrimination (LGBTQ Senior Bill of Rights)”**  
**Submitted to The House Health and Government Operations Committee**  
**March 5, 2020**

**Position: Support**

Dear Health and Government Operations Committee,

My name is Mariel Villanueva, I am a nursing student and I have my Public Health clinical at Chase Brexton, Baltimore, MD in which we work with LGBT+ elders in the community. If there is one overarching theme that I see, it is that this population of LGBT+ elders have been silenced. They are not only silenced by the health care system due to lack of knowledge on how to provide trauma informed care for these patients, or LGBT+ elders themselves choose to go back into hiding their gender/sexual identity in fears of experiencing discrimination. By silencing this population, we are creating even greater barriers to accessing healthcare for this community. We must remove the barrier of discrimination in order to foster an environment of safety for these LGBT+ elders so that they don't feel the need to hide anymore.

Gen Silent, a documentary film on the aging LGBT+ population illustrates their fears of discrimination in this present time period, going “back into the closet” in fear of being denied healthcare, and other additional barriers to seeking proper healthcare, such as health insurance. There are a number of issues of accessibility, oppression, and isolation of the LGBT+ elder population that need to be addressed. Many of LGBT older adults have chosen to remain silent about their orientations, hence “Gen Silent”, because they are worried of being discriminated against in their care. For those that are trans or homosexual, this may lead to gaps in screening criteria, proper diagnosis, and treatment.

Please consider being in favor of House Bill 1010 so that we can improve access to affirming care for the LGBT+ population.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Mariel Villanueva