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	Subject: Position:	CC #19-0385 FAVORABLE		

To: President and Members
of the City Council
c/o 409 City Hall

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The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) is pleased to have the opportunity to review City Council bill #19-0385, entitled "Gender-Inclusive Single-User Restrooms." This legislation will require that any single-stall bathroom be made available to persons of any gender identity and that any associated signage be gender-inclusive.

Maryland greatly expanded protections for transgender individuals under the 2014 Fairness for All Marylanders Act, including the use of locker rooms and other public accommodations. In keeping with the intent of the 2014 Act, Council Bill #19-0385 seeks to reduce the stigma and violence experienced by the transgender community in the public sphere. According to the National Center for Transgender Equality ("NCTE"), there are at least 1.4 million transgender people in the United States. According to a 2015 NCTE survey of 27,715 transgender individuals, 46% of respondents noted having been verbally harassed in the past year. Moreover, 9% of respondents were physically attacked within the same period.

The issue of harassment is especially pronounced in places of public accommodation, where 31% of respondents reported having experienced some form of mistreatment. It was noted in the NCTE survey that within the prior year, "respondents reported being verbally harassed (12%), physically attacked (1%), or sexually assaulted (1%) when accessing a restroom." With respect to public restrooms, stigma plays an important role as the NCTE survey makes mention that "more than half (59%) of respondents avoided using a public restroom in the past year because they were afraid of confrontations or other problems they might experience."

Out of consideration for the mental and physical health, as well as the equitable treatment, of transgender individuals, BCHD strongly urges a **favorable report** on Council Bill #19-0385.

