

MARY L. WASHINGTON, PH.D  
Legislative District 43  
Baltimore City

Education, Health, and  
Environmental Affairs Committee

*Chair*  
Joint Committee on Ending  
Homelessness

*Chair*  
Joint Committee on Children,  
Youth, and Families



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**SUPPORT – SB 765**

**Minority Business Enterprises – Sexual and Gender Minorities  
(Imari's Business Pride Act)**

Members of the Baltimore City Council

Testimony of Senator Mary Washington, March 23, 2021

President Nick J. Mosby and Members of the Council,

SB765 alters the definition of "socially and economically disadvantaged individual" for purposes of certifying certain minority business enterprises to include certain sexual and gender minorities.

Currently Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and California, and a host of cities (14) already have recognized certified LGBT Business Certified Enterprises (LGBTBES) with the following states in the process to recognize LGBTBES: Oregon, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Connecticut, and Illinois.

In November of 2019, Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) approved policy to include The National LGBT Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC) Certified LGBT Business Enterprises® (Certified LGBTBEs®) in contracting and procurement opportunities. In 2018 our very own Baltimore City, through Executive Order 2018-02, recognized LGBTQ-Owned business entities, those with 51% or more ownership by LGBTQ+ individuals.

With more diverse providers, Maryland can achieve statewide goals and save taxpayer's dollars by creating greater competition while driving down bid prices. LGBT business owners add \$1.7 Trillion to the US economy.

I want to take this opportunity to thank my constituent, Terrance Threweatt, who submitted this bill request in honor of this brother, Imari, who passed away. Imari designed and sold gender-affirming apparel for transmen from his family's clothing store in Downtown Baltimore.

I ask you for a favorable report on SB765.

In partnership,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mary Washington". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Senator Mary Washington, District 43, Baltimore City