



CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Amber Greene, Chief Equity Officer Director, Office of Equity & Civil Rights
ANALYST	Zachary Wellman, Equity Policy Analyst
CC	Mayor's Office of Government Relations
DATE	06/05/2025
SUBJECT	City Council Bill 25-0015R Informational Hearing – Well-being of the Transgender Community in Baltimore

POSITION: Favorable

BILL SYNOPSIS

The Office of Equity & Civil Rights (OECR) has reviewed and is herein reporting on City Council Bill 25-0015R – Informational Hearing – Well-being of the Transgender Community in Baltimore. This is a City Council Resolution that seeks to hold a hearing to provide information on the following:

- Call upon several Baltimore City agencies to testify via a public hearing.
- Request information from those agencies on the services provided to transgender residents.
- Request information from those agencies on the general well-being of the transgender community in Baltimore.

SUMMARY OF POSITION

The OECR is excited by the opportunity to present the services it provides to trans residents in a public hearing. While the office serves all Baltimoreans, regardless of protected characteristics such as gender identity, we would like to highlight some of the services the OECR provides that address some of the most pressing issues faced by trans individuals.

First, the OECR houses the Baltimore City Commission for Women (WC), which believes in a high quality of life and equal rights, opportunities, and access to services for all women, women-identifying, non-binary, and/or assigned-female-at-birth individuals. The Commission develops information systems, provides advice and counsel, conducts research, hosts educational programming, analyzes policy, and advocates for women's issues to improve the lives of and opportunities for all women, women-identifying, non-binary, and/or assigned-female-at-birth

individuals in Baltimore. The Baltimore Commission for Women is a resource for those that they serve to assist them in accessing information and services intended to improve their lives and the lives of their families.

- The WC Affirms: trans-women are women.
- WC's mission and bylaws use gender-inclusive language and reflect a broad mandate that includes:
 - Trans women
 - Individuals assigned female at birth
 - Gender non-binary individuals
- We actively seek input from the trans community, partnering with the Mayor's Office of LGBTQ Affairs to ensure meaningful collaboration.
- We believe all trans people in Baltimore deserve to thrive without compromising their identities.
- As advisors and advocates, we:
 - Support legislation that protects and empowers the trans community
 - Oppose any policy that threatens their safety or dignity
- We recognize that trans people are essential to Baltimore's social fabric, and the City is stronger for their presence, perspectives, and leadership.

Next, the OECR houses the Police Accountability Division, which is composed of the Police Accountability Board (PAB) and the Administrative Charging Committee (ACC). The PAB and ACC were created by Maryland state mandate under the Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021 (Anton's Law).

The PAB receives all complaints of police misconduct, without limitation, involving the public and refers them to the appropriate law enforcement agency for investigation; however, the PAB can not currently assign independent investigators to cases. The PAB also meets quarterly with law enforcement agencies to review and make policy recommendations. It advises the Mayor and City Council on policing matters and appoints civilian members to other important civilian oversight boards. The ACC is a body of five (5) civilian members, including the Chair of the PAB and four other community members, who review the investigations for the complaints filed with the PAB and decide on disciplinary outcomes.

The PAB and ACC exist to ensure trust, safety, and fairness among the trans community of Baltimore when interacting with law enforcement. This is an important component to trans equity as, according to an ACLU national survey analyzed in Policing Progress: Findings from a National Survey of LGBTQ+ People's Experiences (2024), the ACLU found:

- 26.8% of transgender people report experiencing physical force by police
- 30.7% of transgender respondents report being arrested, compared to 20% of all LGBTQ+ people and 13.6% of non-LGBTQ+ people.
- 44.9% of transgender and 33.1% of nonbinary respondents experienced insulting language by the police as opposed to 14.6% of LGBTQ+ cisgender men.
- 61.3% of transgender and 27.4% of non-binary respondents reported being likely to call the police for help, as opposed to 80.4% of cisgender LGBTQ+ people and 86.9% of non-LGBTQ+ people.

Finally, the OECR also houses the Community Relations Commission is the City Agency designated to enforce Article 4 of the Baltimore City Code, which prohibits discrimination based on race, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, color, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, and **gender identity or expression**. Prohibited areas of discrimination include employment, public accommodations, education, health and welfare services, and housing.

The CRC receives and investigates discrimination complaints. They have the authority to subpoena information and witnesses, to hold public hearings when conciliation attempts fail, to issue cease and desist orders, and to take unresolved cases into court. The Commission also develops and monitors formally negotiated conciliatory agreements when a violation is found.

The CRC exists to protect the civil rights of Baltimore's trans community and address any discrimination they may face. This is necessary as, in 2008, the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National LGBTQ Task Force launched the first comprehensive national transgender discrimination study. They found 63% of respondents reported experiencing "serious acts of discrimination" —events that would have a major impact on a person's quality of life and ability to sustain themselves financially or emotionally.

According to *Workplace Experiences of Transgender Employees*, a 2024 study by the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law, 82% of transgender respondents report being discriminated against or harassed in the workplace because of their gender identity/sexual orientation.

The work of the OECR to combat discrimination and police misconduct against transgender individuals is particularly critical amid the numerous executive orders of the Trump Presidential Administration, namely Executive Orders 14168 - *Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government* and Executive Order 14288 - *Strengthening and Unleashing America's Law Enforcement to Pursue Criminals and Protect Innocent Citizens*.

Executive Order 14168 - *Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government* federally withdraws federal recognition for transgender individuals' existence. Most concerning, it also calls for the Attorney General not to provide Title VII protections to transgender individuals. As a response, the City of Baltimore must be committed to vehemently opposing these measures and protecting the civil rights of transgender individuals where the federal government refuses.

Executive Order 14288 - *Strengthening and Unleashing America's Law Enforcement to Pursue Criminals and Protect Innocent Citizens* promotes aggressive policing tactics and the further militarization of local law enforcement agencies while combatting efforts to hold law enforcement officers accused of misconduct accountable. Because of the disparities in the policing of transgender individuals as noted above and the Trump Administration's defiance against police accountability, it is imperative that the City of Baltimore, through the PAB and ACC, guarantee fair, transparent, and accountable policing.

CONCLUSION

The OECR deeply supports initiatives to improve the equity of Baltimore's transgender

community and works tirelessly to uphold the civil rights of transgender residents in the City. As such, the OECR respectfully requests a **favorable** committee report on City Council Bill 25-0015R and is happy to respond to any questions the committee may have.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amber Greene

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