



HB0427 – Action for Change of Name - Waiver of Publication Requirement
Presented to the Hon. Will Smith and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceeding Committee
March 17, 2020 1:00 p.m.

POSITION: SUPPORT

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges Members of the Senate Proceedings Committee a **favorable report on HB0427 - Action for Change of Name- Waiver of Publication Requirement**, sponsored by Delegate Emily Shetty.

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice. We strive to protect all Marylander's right to body autonomy, including their right to change their name to fit their preferred gender identity. HB0427 seeks to address concerns of discrimination or safety of an individual wishing to change one's name without the requirement of a legal notice of the intent be published.

According to *The People's Law Library of Maryland*, anyone can change their name where "a notice of the request must be published in a newspaper of general circulation in that county, unless the Court grants a waiver of publication."ⁱ According to the American Civil Liberties Union, transgender individuals experience a lot of fear when they are required to show their ID to the police, security guard, TSA agent, and even the store clerk that doesn't match their preferred gender identity.ⁱⁱ Trans folk already face a lot of physical and sexual violence for their mere existence when occupying public spaces, so their human rights should legally and justly be protected by the law. In addition, trans and gender non-binary people experience discrimination from both healthcare providers and their healthcare insurances when addressing their reproductive healthcare needs. HB0427 recognizes that the requirement of publishing the legal notice before a name change may risk harassment and harm of these individuals, by authorizing the court to waive such a requirement under certain circumstances.

This legislation helps to protect and give agency to trans individuals over their own bodies and identities in our state. With gender being a social construction, one should not be obligated to keep the name assigned to them at birth that does not match both their preferred and current identity. For these reasons, **NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges a favorable committee report on HB0427**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

ⁱ "Going to Court and Filing a Petition." 2019. *The People's Law Library of Maryland*. <https://www.peoples-law.org/name-change-adult>

ⁱⁱ "Transgender People and ID." 2020. *ACLU*. <https://www.aclu.org/issues/lgbt-rights/transgender-rights/transgender-people-and-id>