



Fighting Discrimination and Protecting The Civil Rights of All LGBTQ+ Marylanders

My administration will make Maryland the most welcoming and anti-discriminatory state in the union. In the Obama Administration, I fought to protect the rights of underrepresented and persecuted people around the world. My job at the State Department and the White House was often to push nations towards becoming both tolerant and supportive of full equality. I intend to bring this experience to Maryland, where I will enact the boldest anti-discrimination agenda in the country and fight President Trump and Attorney General Sessions's assault on fundamental LGBTQ+ rights.

Maryland has made progress, but still has a long way to go towards guaranteeing equality for all its residents, regardless of their race, gender, socioeconomic status or sexual identity. The statistics for transgender Marylanders are particularly alarming. According to the National Transgender Discrimination Survey:

- **71%** experience harassment at work
- **42%** have experienced an adverse job action, like being fired, demoted, or denied a promotion.
- **17%** have been denied a home or apartment because of their gender identity.
- **54%** report being abused verbally in a place of public space.

To protect civil rights and improve the lives of all Marylanders, my administration will take several immediate steps to reinforce and expand protections for the LGBTQ+ community in our state.

1. **Support LGBTQ+ troops and federal employees:** Attorney General Frosh has helped lead the charge nationally against President Trump's unconstitutional attack on transgender troops serving in our armed forces and federal employees. I will stand with General Frosh in this effort, while also taking decisive action here at home to ensure that no discrimination occurs within the Maryland National Guard or fight any discrimination on federal facilities or installations in Maryland.
2. **Repeal Maryland's sodomy laws.** 15 years after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled these laws unconstitutional, Maryland still has laws on the books that are both outdated and

¹ [Equality Maryland.](#)

offensive. They are an affront to every Marylander, and we cannot build a welcoming society while this kind of language remains enshrined in our legal statutes.

3. **Build upon the historic Fairness for All Marylanders Act.** This act bans discrimination based on gender or sexual identity; however, there remain a few exceptions that permit ongoing discrimination against LGBTQ+ people in some schools, religious institutions, private clubs, insurance, and other fields. I will work with the General Assembly to eliminate these exceptions, so no Marylander experiences discrimination where they live, learn, pray, work, purchase goods or services, recreate, or receive health services. Additionally, we need to give this legislation the backbone required to ensure it works by:
 - Ensuring anyone unfairly discriminated against based upon their gender or sexual identity has legal avenues and state-provided resources to right wrongdoings.
 - The Maryland State Department of Education must adopt guidelines clarifying how LGBTQ students are treated in schools to ensure both equal and equitable treatment remains the standard across the state.
4. **End discrimination in housing, healthcare, employment, education, and other essential services.** LGBTQ+ Marylanders face both explicit and implicit discrimination that too often manifests in restricted access to essential services. Whether it is housing, healthcare, employment, pay, education, or safety, LGBTQ+ individuals simply do not receive the same opportunities afforded straight and cisgender Marylanders. I will correct these kinds of systemic inequities by establishing more explicit nondiscrimination ordinances and codifying administrative practices into law, while identifying and eliminating local statutes that enable discriminatory practices to persist. Discrimination manifests itself uniquely in different communities, so I also plan to work closely with local leaders to target specific points of tension and the barriers to equality.
5. **End LGBTQ+ youth homelessness.** 40% of homeless youth nationwide identify as LGBTQ+; Maryland can do more to support our kids. I propose:
 - Allocating additional funding from the state's general fund for specific programs designed to help homeless LGBTQ+ youth — including homeless shelters, job training, healthcare, and financial literacy initiatives.
 - Expand LGBTQ+ specific resources, particularly mental health and educational services, for students and youth program participants across the state.
6. **Support legislation explicitly protecting the rights of same sex couples to adopt children.** It is well-past time to stop separating families or preventing them from forming because of bigotry. In the current political climate, the right to adopt must be explicitly protected at the state level and fought for aggressively against the Trump

Administration's agenda at the national level. I would further support legislation that affirms and codifies the right of LGBTQ families to full parentage. There should be no legal difference between families inside versus outside the LGBTQ community, only additional laws to ensure those most vulnerable to discrimination can fully exercise their rights.

7. **Ensure all public applications or data collection forms include a third, unspecified gender marker for identification.** My administration will ensure that all applications and forms, including documents for licenses, identification cards, taxes, permits, jobs, etc. allow individuals to respect the identity of every Marylander. I will also direct the Maryland Department of Transportation, which oversees the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA), to create an online portal to easily adjust a person's gender identity, rather than burden people in the LGBTQ community with additional travel to a MVA central hub.
8. **Improve data collection for the LGBTQ community to drive evidenced-based policy.** Too often we fail to collect LGBTQ specific data to inform the allocation of resources, rendering the massive disparities experienced by members of the LGBTQ community — particularly transgender people — invisible to policymakers. Maryland needs a state-sponsored commission to study, investigate, and close the gaps in health, income, and well-being outcomes that the LGBTQ community experiences. My administration will ensure we have the right tools to make the policy needed to improve lives.