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Written Testimony by Council Member Patrick A. Paschall
Supporting SB0212, the Fairness for All Marylanders Act of 2014

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Please accept this written testimony in support of SB0212, the Fairness for All Marylanders Act of 2014. As a member of the Hyattsville City Council and as lead sponsor of the Hyattsville Human Rights Act, I am proud of Hyattsville for being the first city in Prince George's County and the first small jurisdiction in the state to add transgender-inclusive non-discrimination protections in the areas of employment, housing, and public accommodations, and I look forward to being proud of Maryland for being the 17th state to add these protections at the state-wide level.

I appreciate the leadership of Senator Madaleno for introducing SB0212, the Fairness for All Marylanders Act, and to Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee Chair, Senator Brian Frosh, for holding this important hearing and moving forward with a bill that will add non-discrimination protections for transgender people to our state's laws.

As you may know, the bill would have a significant impact on many Marylanders. The Williams Institute estimates that 53% of the Maryland population, including an estimated 9200 transgender Marylanders, currently live in a jurisdiction that does not include legal protection on the basis of gender identity. The National Transgender Discrimination Survey reports that in this country, 90% of transgender people have experienced harassment on the job or hid their identity from their colleagues just because of their gender identity, and 47% report experiencing an adverse job outcome such as being fired for being transgender.

In the housing context, 19% of transgender people are denied housing and 11% evicted simply because they are transgender or gender non-conforming. As a result of this and other forms of discrimination, 19% of transgender people have reported being homeless at some point in their lives.

Discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in places of public accommodations takes a variety of forms, including being denied equal treatment or service, disrespect, verbal harassment, and physical assault. Nationally, 53% of transgender and gender non-conforming respondents reported being verbally harassed in a place of public accommodation because of their gender identity, 44% were denied equal service or treatment, and an astounding 8% were physically assaulted in a place of public accommodation.

While the State of Maryland prohibits discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations on a variety of protected bases, including sexual orientation, no such protections currently exist for transgender people. Indeed, under federal law, Maryland state law, Prince George's County law, and until

just a few months ago Hyattsville law, no explicit protections from discrimination on the basis of gender identity exist.

When Hyattsville passed its transgender-inclusive non-discrimination law, we saw an outpouring of support from the Hyattsville community. We had many residents attend our meetings on the issue to express support for the legislation and gratitude for our efforts to pass such a historic law, including a number of residents that self-identified as transgender and gender non-conforming people who would personally be protected from discrimination in Hyattsville as a result of our efforts.

Hyattsville, and indeed the entire state of Maryland, has a thriving lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community. SB0212, the Fairness for All Marylanders Act of 2014, is designed to send a clear message to the community that LGBT people are fully welcome and protected from discrimination. It means transgender Marylanders will be able to go to a restaurant in Maryland, buy or rent a residence in Maryland, or seek a job in Maryland with the comfort and knowledge that they have legal protections in this state.

It may surprise many to know that laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity are not a new phenomena. Laws dating back to the 1970s have included explicit protections on the basis of gender identity, and none have ever been successfully challenged in court. Today, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force reports that over 45% of the nation's population lives in a jurisdiction that includes explicit non-discrimination protections on the basis of gender identity, including 16 states, the District of Columbia, and over 150 county and local governments.

I look forward to Maryland being the 17th state to add explicitly transgender-inclusive non-discrimination protections to the laws of our state, consistent with our history as a leading progressive state that works to ensure all Marylanders have full access to equal participation in society.

Thank you,

Patrick A. Paschall
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Hyattsville City Council