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Dear Howard County Council--

Please find attached a copy of my prepared testimony in favor of my appointment to the Howard County LGBTQIA+ Commission. I look forward to testifying in person later today.

Best,
Dinah Yukich

4/20/2026
Dinah Yukich
Highland, Maryland

Thank you to the Howard County Council & those present for the opportunity to speak in favor of my appointment to the LGBTQIA+ Commission. By way of introduction, I am a roughly 20-year Howard County resident, having moved here with my wife, Sarah—before I was publicly out as a trans* woman—with the intent to settle and raise our family. We chose Howard County for its dedication to inclusivity and diversity; for its schools; for its commitment to community and its people. In short, for the values that make Howard County Howard County.

Since that time, the shape of our family has changed—from two people in an apparent heterosexual family, to four with the births of our wonderful children, and more recently to the visibly queer family before you, after, with the dedicated support of everyone in it, I was finally able to be fully present as the woman I am. But I do not credit the ability to be present as myself on my family alone. It takes more than that—the support of the local community—in law, in culture, in resourcing. One of the first people to know about how our family presentation was shifting, outside of close friends, was the Rainbow Representative for our local elementary school. Programs like that have an outside impact on the ability for someone like me, and for our family, to be able to safely navigate society—to be a part of the greater community.

My choice to be involved in bodies such as this has been shaped by my values. When I was younger, I attended a school that had been composed of separate boy's and girl's schools, which had merged in the 70s. The boy's school motto—"Aim High," taken from the Aeneid drips of privilege and "male" aspirations and strongly contrasts with that of the girl's school: "Enter to Learn, Go Forth to Serve." As students, this juxtaposition was often seen for the cringy, dated view of gender roles that is easily read into it. As a closeted trans* woman, I read the contrast as a challenge to unify. Now, as an adult, in Howard County, I have found myself living adjacent to and amongst people whose vocation calls upon them to "Speak Truth to Power." Many of these same people now find themselves labeled as "anti-American" for solely their sexuality or existence. This despite spending their lives working in the most "American" of fashions—without seeking accolade or aggrandizement, quietly serving the entire community.

Bodies like this commission present an opportunity to bridge our small community to society at large through visibility, representation, and understanding. I am a believer in the necessity of these bodies, and the vision that calls them into being—and have strived to use what time and energy that I have to help be a part of that bridge.

Thank you,
Dinah Yukich