

Sayers, Margery

From: Wawa Mosier <wawa.mosier@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 12, 2021 6:52 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Yes for inclusive bathrooms! CB20-2021

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I'm writing in support of the Inclusive Bathrooms Act (CB20-2021).

It's just good sense to allow for gender neutral single stall bathrooms! It's easier for my husband and I as a cis-gender family to not have to choose a mismatch facility when he takes our daughter to the bathroom or when I take my son. And it's safer and more inclusive for our trans friends. It doesn't hurt anybody, and it helps plenty of people! A win-win for sure.

I encourage everyone on the council to vote in support.

Thank you!

Barbara Mosier

Savage, Md

Sayers, Margery

From: Ellie Litwack <ellielitwack@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 12, 2021 3:11 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Written Testimony, CB20-2021
Attachments: comments and proposed text.pdf

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Dear Councilmembers,

I would like to submit my written testimony on CB20-2021. My testimony includes suggestions for aligning the bill with the International Building Code's best practices for multi-user gender neutral restrooms.

Thank you for your consideration,
Ellie Litwack

Sayers, Margery

From: Ellie Litwack <ellielitwack@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 12, 2021 3:11 PM
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Dear Councilmembers,

I would like to submit my written testimony on CB20-2021. My testimony includes suggestions for aligning the bill with the International Building Code's best practices for multi-user gender neutral restrooms.

Thank you for your consideration,
Ellie Litwack

Comments on and proposed amendment to CB20-2021: Single-user restrooms-gender availability, signage

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Executive Summary

The 2021 Edition of the International Building Code (IBC2021) requires that buildings make single user restrooms “available for use by all persons regardless of their sex” (IBC2021, [P] 2902.1.2). IBC 2021 also adopts other measures which ensure that gender neutral restrooms count towards buildings’ minimum fixture requirements.

CB20-2021 should be amended to include all the measures in IBC2021 2902 (the section related to the number of restroom fixtures required in buildings). Doing so will give building developers freedom to add multi-user gender-neutral restrooms.

The council should also require that new buildings and retrofits comply with the IBC2021 2902.1.1.2 guidelines for multi-user gender-neutral restrooms.

Introduction

In my sophomore year at the University of Maryland, the school implemented a new policy converting all single-user restrooms to gender neutral ones. At the time, I had just started transitioning from male to female, and I felt really uncomfortable using gender-segregated restrooms. Whether I went to a men’s or a women’s restroom, people would stare at me and tell me to leave. The new policy felt like it could make using the restroom on campus much less stressful.

I soon learned, however, that the policy didn’t really give me equal access to public accommodations. A perhaps overly dramatic school newspaper article summarized my predicament at the time:

As she sits in class, Ellie Litwack realizes she needs to use the bathroom. Panic falls over the sophomore mechanical engineering major, as she considers the 10-minute walk to the nearest all-gender facility.

The internal debate ensues: miss almost half of class for what should be a two-minute bathroom break, or sit in discomfort for 40 minutes? Her GPA wins out, and for the rest of the period, she sits there, counting down the time until she can finally use the bathroom.

Not only are single-user restrooms inconveniently located and scarce, they're also often dirtier and less well maintained than multi-user restrooms. When a single-user restroom is clean and functioning, it can get busy. I've been in long lines of trans people, parents with children, and adults with caregivers waiting for a single-user restroom right next to a multi-user restroom with plenty of open stalls. Standing there, waiting, watching other people walk in and out of a restroom you can't safely use, is a frustrating, demeaning experience.

I'm very excited that CB20-2021 is doing something about this problem. However, the council has the opportunity to go further. The most recent version of the International Building Code provides guidelines for multi-user gender-neutral restrooms. These guidelines ensure that urinals are in stalls so that all users can feel comfortable. I hope that the council updates the County Code so that new construction and retrofit restrooms are built in accordance with these best practices.

Changes in IBC2021 2902 compared with IBC2018 2902

IBC2021 mandates that all single user restrooms be "available for use by all persons regardless of their sex" (IBC2021, [P] 2902.1.2). In contrast, IBC2018 allows for gender-neutral single-user restrooms but does not mandate them (IBC2018, [P] 2902.2.1).

IBC2021 allows for multi-user restrooms to be designated for use by all genders (IBC2021, [P] 2902.1.1.2 and [P] 2902.2.6). IBC2021 specifies that urinals in all gender multi-user restrooms must be enclosed in stalls (IBC2021, [P] 2902.1.1.2). In contrast, IBC2018 does not allow for multi-user all gender restrooms in most buildings (IBC2021 [P] 2902.2). Where IBC2018 does allow multi-user all gender restrooms, it does not provide guidance for how to ensure privacy around urinals.

Advantages of Multi-User Gender-Neutral Restrooms

IBC2021 2902.1.1.2 allows for multi-user gender-neutral restrooms. IBC2021 2902.1.1.2 also ensures that urinals in multi-user gender-neutral restrooms are private.

Multi-user gender-neutral restrooms provide advantages to building developers and building users. For building developers, multi-user gender-neutral restrooms significantly reduce construction costs. They eliminate the need for expensive walls between male and female restrooms and use floor space more efficiently.

For building users, multi-user gender-neutral restrooms provide quicker, more comfortable access. At times of high usage, such as during concert intermission, women's restrooms typically have much longer lines than men's restrooms. In a simulation performed by queuing researchers at the University of Ghent, restrooms like those allowed by IBC2021 2902.1.1.2 reduce women's restroom wait times by a

factor of four. With gender segregated restrooms, women wait an average of 6:19 minutes during peak times, while men wait only 11 seconds. With a gender-neutral restroom, men and women both wait only about one minute.

Further, multi-user gender-neutral restrooms are more comfortable for most users. They eliminate the harassment that transgender users are often subjected to in gender-segregated restrooms. By providing private urinals, they also make it easier for the 14.4% of people with paruresis (a psychological disorder characterized by the inability to urinate in the presence of others) to use the restroom. Buildings often provide diaper changing stations only in women's restrooms. Gender-neutral restrooms ensure parents of all genders have access to these. Gender-neutral restrooms also make it easier for users such as children, disabled adults, and elderly people to have a different-gender caregiver accompany them to the restroom.

The benefits to both building developers and building users are clear. Therefore, the council should require that all new construction and retrofits use gender-neutral restrooms as described by IBC2021 2902.1.1.2.

Conclusion

The council should adopt all the measures in IBC2021 2902 because they provide building developers the freedom to include multi-user gender-neutral restrooms. Further, the council should ensure that new construction and retrofits include multi-user gender-neutral restrooms. In addition to numerous other benefits for building developers and users, this is the only way for transgender residents to have the freedom to fully access public accommodations.

Proposed Amended Bill Text

The proposed amended text could replace paragraphs (A) and (B) in CB20-2021. While the amended text references IBC2021, it could be used whether or not the council adopts IBC2021 because it would amend whichever version of the code is incorporated in Section 3.100.(a) of the County Code.

Sec. 14.1201. – Gender-Inclusive Restrooms

(A) Applicability.

(1) This section does not apply to:

(I) A private restroom in:

1. A residence;
2. A hospital; or
3. An inn, hotel, motel, or other establishment that provides lodging to transient guests;

(II) A restroom that is only accessible from a private room or office;

or

(III) A restroom in any portion of a building owned or occupied by the County, if the County implements a policy that meets the requirement of paragraph (B) of this section for restrooms in a County-owned or occupied building by December 31, 2023.

(B) Requirements.

- (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, beginning on December 31, 2023, a public single-user restroom in a commercial or industrial establishment or a place of public accommodation, as defined in 12.210(B) of the County Code, must be:
 - (I) Made available for use by individuals of any gender; and
 - (II) Identified with gender-inclusive signage that does not indicate a specific gender, such as “bathroom”, “restroom”, “toilet”, or a symbol indicating the restroom’s availability for use by any individual regardless of gender.
- (2) A restroom in a commercial or industrial establishment or a place of public accommodation, as defined in section 12.120(B) of the County Code, that is new construction or a retrofit:
 - (I) Must be designated to serve all genders;
 - (II) Must be identified with gender-inclusive signage that does not indicate a specific gender, such as “bathroom”, “restroom”, “toilet”, or a symbol indicating the restroom’s availability for use by any individual regardless of gender; and
 - (III) May only have urinals located in stalls unless the restroom is
 1. A restroom for a dwelling unit or sleeping unit, as defined by The International Building Code, 2021 Edition, Published by the International Code Council, Inc.;
 2. A restroom in a facility with a total occupant load, as defined by The International Building Code, 2021 Edition, including both employees and customers, of 15 or fewer;
 3. A restroom in a mercantile occupancy, as defined by The International Building Code, 2021 Edition, in which the maximum occupant load is 100 or fewer;
 4. A restroom in a business occupancy, as defined by The International Building Code, 2021 Edition, in which the maximum occupant load is 25 or fewer;

Or

 5. A single user toilet provided in accordance with section 2902.1.2 of The International Building Code, 2021 Edition.
- (3) The minimum fixture count of a building with multiple-user restrooms designated to serve all genders shall be calculated at 100 percent of the total number of fixtures required for a building with the same total occupant load with separated facilities provided for each sex.

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Sayers, Margery

From: Max Crownover <crownover.max@pflaghoco.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 16, 2021 9:10 AM
To: Gelwicks, Colette; CouncilMail
Subject: CB20-21 Testimony

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Greetings Members of Howard County Council,

I am writing to provide additional testimony in support of CB20-21 and provide feedback on some of the other testimony I heard. PFLAG Columbia-Howard County reiterates it's full support for CB20-21, but we also acknowledge that this bill does not completely allay the concerns and fears of the members of the LGBTQ+ community. It admittedly doesn't solve the whole problem.

What is the correct solution... all-gender restroom facilities. One of our chapter members told me a personal story that really speaks to what our end goal should be. She spoke of staying in a hotel in NYC where there were all-gender, multi-stall restrooms in the lobby. She said "It was very cool to be standing at the sink washing my hands next to my non-binary kid and several others - all different genders. No issues at all. We need to normalize this experience!"

As recommended by the woman who followed me in giving testimony on 3/15 (I didn't catch her name), PFLAG HoCo strongly support a policy that requires construction of new public buildings in Howard County to comply with the 2021 edition of the International Plumbing Code, which includes criteria for construction of all-gender, multi-stall restroom designs. That said, we do not believe that the progress of CB20-21 should be stopped or delayed by adding this amendment. The Inclusive Bathroom Act is a step in the right direction and a way to begin the process of dissociating gender from restroom facilities.

The comment made by the next speaker (Mr. Ramsey, I believe) that 90% of transgender youths "revert" to their birth gender refers to several pieces of faulty research. The prevailing medical opinion is that parents and families (and society writ large) should support transgender children, allowing them to transition to their true gender identity. I do not have the references for this immediately available, but will provide them separately.

Respectfully,
Max Crownover

Max Crownover, PhD
President/Steering Committee Chair
PFLAG Columbia-Howard County
www.pflaghoco.org
[Click here to schedule a time to talk with me](#)
410-782-5536
He, Him, His
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Sayers, Margery

From: Kimberly Gillette <kgillettea11@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 15, 2021 6:56 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: CB20-2021 testimony

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Good evening,

I apologize for the late testimony but I just learned this legislation is pending. As a born and raised county resident and parent of a non-binary college student, I have a personal commitment towards gender inclusive bathroom. I also write this as a therapist who specializes in working with transgender and non-binary adolescents and adults. I have lost track of how many have told me of being in public or at school for over 8 hours and being terrified to use the bathroom of their choice. Terrified of being verbally or physically assaulted or demoralized. This can lead to bladder infections and affects quality of life as they are always timing their daily activities to allow them to rush home to use their own bathroom. It is such a small but powerful thing and gives people their dignity.

Please consider supporting gender inclusive bathrooms.

Thank you for your time,

Kimberly Gillette

Sent from my iPhone