

November 14, 2011

Dear Members of Howard County Council:

Parents and Friends of Ex-gays and Gays, object to Howard County's Bill 54 -2011, which will add "gender identity or expression" to the classification list of individuals who are protected against discriminatory practices.

The proposed, flawed law insufficiently and incorrectly defines "gender identity or expression" as follows:

Gender Identity or Expression means a Gender-Related Identity or Appearance of an Individual regardless of the individual's assigned sex at birth.

Laws need to be clear and non-ambiguous to be constitutionally acceptable. Using the words "gender-related identity" to explain what "gender identity" means and "expression" to explain "appearance" is circular and fails to explain or define anything.

For the average person, the "gender identity" of a stranger is based on the actual visual presentation of that "stranger" and is perceived to be either male or female. The average person cannot know what the "stranger's" possible mental disordered thinking is or what, if any, deception or irregularity exists in the "stranger's" possibly contrived appearance.

The American Psychological Association committee on LGBT affairs fact sheet notes a vast number of variations in gender identity that deviate from binary male/female identity and appearance.¹ These "variations" are generally defined as "mental disorders by the American Psychiatric Handbook of Mental Disorders". Such variations include, cross dressers, transsexuals, multigendered, and even voyeurs attempting to mask their deviant desires. Exact definitions of these terms vary from person to person and may change over time, but often include a sense of blending or alternating genders.

Remember an individual who is a biological male but identifies as a female still retains a sexual preference for a female.

The proposed "definition" of "gender identity or expression" does nothing to advise the average person what scrutiny, perception or comprehension is required by that person to avoid prosecution. The proposed law is unconstitutionally vague and does not enhance the present code of Howard County. It only adds confusion.

Sincerely,

Regina Griggs
Executive Director
Parents and Friends of Ex-gays and Gays

¹ <http://www.apa.org/topics/sexuality/transgender.pdf>