

## Maryland Citizens for a Responsible Government



Citizens for a Responsible Government

Tuesday, December 18, 2007

Dear Rabbi:

Please read this critical information regarding the impact the new 'gender identity' bill will have on your synagogue. Last month, County Executive Ike Leggett signed into law Bill 23-07. Bill 23-07 extends extensive protections to transgender individuals (e.g., biological males who dress and behave as women). Unlike the proposed Federal ENDA Gender Identity bill, there is no specific exemption for religious organizations. A Jewish Day school's ability to refuse employment to transvestites and cross-dressers is unclear.

Montgomery County students are taught that Gender Identity means an individual's actual or perceived gender, including a person's gender-related appearance, expression, image, identity, or behavior, whether or not those gender-related characteristics differ from the characteristics customarily associated with the person's assigned sex at birth.

Deuteronomy (22:5) clearly delineates a distinction between men and women and further describes cross-dressing as an abomination. If the act of cross-dressing is condemned so strongly in the Bible, certainly considering a man AS a woman could not be accepted by the faith community.

*In order to accommodate the sensitivities of less than 0.1% of the county, the privacy and sensitivities of all Montgomery County women are being compromised. Additionally, we hold reservations about the safety of women in places where they will be exposed to a man who is a "self-identified woman" and still retains sexual attraction to women.*

The sponsors of this bill have already hinted towards using Montgomery County as a pilot program towards expanding this practice across the state. We believe that the women of Montgomery County should be given a voice when considering legislation that potentially puts them at risk and are now working hard to bring this bill to a referendum. Only with your help can we collect the 25,000 signatures needed to bring this issue to the people for consideration and a vote. This Shabbat, please encourage everyone to sign the petition before going home on Saturday night (and please ask that the congregation shares this information with their spouses as well).

We look forward to your help,

Moshe Starkman

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Orthodox Jewish Outreach Lead Maryland Citizens for a Responsible Government