Beat: Politics

Fairness for All Marylanders Act of 2013 draws hundreds to Rally in Annapolis

The Time is Now says Sen. Rich Madaleno

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USPA NEWS - The Fairness for all Marylanders Act of 2013 drew about 150 supporters to Annapolis Monday night for Equality Maryland's annual Lobby Day.

The crowd gathered at Lawyers Mall to urge legislators to pass Senate Bill 449 which would add "Gender Identity" to the state's anti discrimination law.

Senator Richard Madaleno (D-18) spoke to an exuberant crowd gathered on Lawyers Mall outside of the State House in Annapolis Monday.

Sen. Madaleno told the crowd of civil rights activist and leaders that "we are on the verge of this last big victory in Maryland". As you go and speak with your legislators this evening "know that it takes 24 votes to pass a bill in the state Senate, we have 23 sponsors on this legislation.", Madaleno said.

This legislation came before the Maryland General Assembly 2 years ago, passed the House of Delegates, and went to the Senate floor in the final hours of the Session and did not survive. "I am very confident we have the votes in the Senate, if we could just get the bill to the floor", Madaleno stated.

What Senate Bill 449 (Fairness for All Marylanders Act) Does

The purpose of SB 449, the Fairness for All Marylanders Act of 2013 is to prohibit descrimination based on gender identity with regard to public accomodations, housing, and employment.

It defines "Gender Identity" in the law as "A Gender-Related Identity, Appearance, Expression, or Behavior of an individual regardless of the individuals assigned sex at birth."

It prohibits anyone licensed or regulated by the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation in Section 2-108 of the Business Regulation Article from discriminating against a person or persons due to their "Gender Identity". This is the same law that currently prohibits discrimination base on race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, marital status, and sexual orientation.

What SB 449 Does NOT do...

While protecting those who identify themselves as transgendered, the Fairness for All Marylanders Act of 2013 does not require employers, employment agencies, labor organizations, or similar parties to grant preferential treatment to any individual or group on the basis of their Gender Identity. Exactly as the current law does not require such on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation, or national origin.

It does not require any employer to deviate from policies which establish and require employees to adhere to reasonable workplace appearance, grooming, and dress standards.

Delegate Luke Clippinger (D-46) also spoke to the crowd stating that he felt quietly confident that the legislation would pass the House, but assured them that he would continue to make every effort to ensure that this bill became law.

The hearing on SB 449 is scheduled for Tuesday, February 26, 2013 at 1:00PM before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee.

If SB 449 makes it out of Committee and passes both the full Senate and House of Delegates, Governor Martin O'Malley is expected to sign it. This would place Maryland at the top of a handful of states (VT, CT, and WA) that have the full panoply of protections for every part of the LGBT Community.

In 2012, Maryland was the first state south of mason dixon line to pass same sex marriage and uphold it in a state wide referendum.

To follow the progress of SB 449, use the following link: http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frmMain.aspx?pid=billpage&stab=01&id=sb0449&tab=subject3&ys=2013RS

To watch Sen. Rich Madaleno's address to those gathered on Lawyers Mall, utilize the following link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5R1N_3OMwk

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