

A recent article in the Gazette is titled “Opponents of the new transgender law win first round.” Referring to the bill as “the transgender law,” is misleading as it obscures the fact that a cacophony of individuals can qualify for the new law simply on the basis of how they choose to dress that day. The word “transgender” is not mentioned even once in Bill 23-07 “Non-discrimination Gender Identity.”

Bill 23-07 defines gender identity as an “individual’s actual or perceived gender, including a person’s gender-related appearance, expression, image, identity or behavior.” Laura Laing¹ author of an article titled “In Between Days” has explained that gender identity definitions are not a medical definitions and that they change “from time to time, person to person.” She concludes,

“That’s a pretty big tent, and it enfolds female impersonators, cross-dressers, drag kings, androgynous individuals, queer youth, pre-op transsexuals, and those who have had sexual-reassignment surgery... often drag kings and queens are in it for the sheer entertainment value.”

While many can’t believe that legislators would enact a bill with a definition this extreme or this vague, Dana Beyer, Senior Advisor to the bills sponsor Duchy Trachtenberg confirms a legislative goal of covering

“all gender variant persons ” including “transsexual women and men, cross-dressers, drag queens and kings, androgynous persons, genderqueer youth and some members of the intersexed community. ”

If the bill is consistently called “the transgender law” by the media and others, then how will the average citizen know that the bill is based on a definition of “gender identity” that can rapidly change “from time to time” and “from person to person.” One cross-dresser has stated about the differences between transsexuals and cross-dressers is that transsexuals want to be women, cross-dressers want to wear the clothes. Should women have to worry about their personal safety and be afraid to complain about a heterosexual male cross dresser in their locker room? Should any employer have to fulfill employment quotas to hire cross-dressers, drag queens, and female impersonators as employees?

If we must give civil rights on the basis of dress, let’s give them to those who are too poor to afford new clothes.

¹Laura Laing

<http://www.citypaper.com/printStory.asp?id=13393>

Dana Beyer

<http://www.equalitymaryland.org/issues/transgender/transgender101.htm>