



## **Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs**

Meeting Minutes  
May 12, 2025  
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
Zoom Virtual Meeting

### Commissioners Present:

Lee Blinder, Chair  
M Pease, Vice Chair  
Ali K.C. Bell  
Joan Bryan  
Josie Caballero  
Mickey Dhir  
Debb Dunn

Stephen Martin  
Paula Neira  
Wendy Novak  
Brandon Russell  
Joe Toolan  
Ly Xīnzhèn Zhǎngsūn

### Commissioners Not Present:

Kurt Doan  
Anthony Fox  
Nicole Hollywood

Asher Kennedy  
Sarah Stern  
Kijana West

### Staff Present:

Jeremy Browning, Director, Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs  
Taylor Harer, Special Assistant, Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs  
Charlotte Hoffman, Policy Advisor, Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs  
Krystal Quinlan, Assistant Attorney General

- I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to Order by Chair Blinder at 6:09 PM. Housekeeping and Meeting Guidelines were read and acknowledged. Additionally, meeting attendees were reminded to add their pronouns to their Zoom names and instructions were provided.
- II. Roll Call: Roll call was conducted by Chair Blinder and they provided a review of the voting procedures using the Zoom reaction functions to indicate vote (green "check" to indicate "yea" and the red "X" to indicate "nay" and no action to abstain).
- III. Agenda Approval: Chair Blinder presented the agenda for the meeting for an open forum for general remarks or comments. After hearing no opposition, the agenda was approved utilizing unanimous consent.

- IV. Approval - Previous Meeting Minutes: The minutes from the April 7, 2025 meeting were presented to the Commission. There were no additions or objections from the Commission and the minutes were approved utilizing unanimous consent.
- V. Reports:
  - A. Chair Report: Chair Blinder highlighted the ongoing challenges facing the LGBTQIA+ community and expressed gratitude for the commission's dedication. They highlighted the importance of Pride season as a time for joy, connection, and resilience. Additionally, they encouraged prioritizing wellness and acknowledged the work of the commission.
  - B. Vice Chair Report: Vice Chair Pease noted the community needs assessment and encouraged use of existing data from the Maryland Trans Survey, with more research briefs expected soon. They shared the personal milestone of passing their dissertation proposal on social support for trans Marylanders and emphasized the importance of joy, connection, and gratitude within the commission's work.
  - C. Directors Report: Director Browning reminded members to complete their 2024 financial disclosures. He announced that the Commission's strategic planning retreat will be held on July 19, 2025 at the Benneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum in Annapolis. He encouraged commissioners to review both the original and amended versions of the legislation that outlines the Commission's full mandates.
- VI. Discussion: 2025 Legislative Session Debrief - Policy Chair Caballero stated that The commission had a highly active legislative session, submitting 33 testimonies.
  - A. Major achievements included the defeat of all anti-LGBTQIA+ bills and the passage of several important measures, including the Carlton R. Smith Act to decriminalize HIV.
  - B. Despite these wins, 12 priority bills failed, including the only trans-specific bill, the Birth Certificate Modernization Act, which was blocked by Senate leadership. Policy Chair Caballero recommended that future efforts should focus on deeper legislative engagement, relationship-building, and proactive advocacy strategies.
- VII. Discussion: 2024 Annual Report - Director Browning shared that the 2024 annual report is about 80% complete, with the plan to publish May 23, 2025. He asked Commission members to review the draft and submit feedback by May 18, 2025. Director Browning noted that some items are still being added and welcomed further input.
- VIII. Discussion: Community Needs Assessment - The Commission is initiating a statewide community needs assessment as part of its 2025 strategic plan. Despite lacking state funding, past efforts like the post-election survey demonstrate that meaningful data collection is still feasible. The assessment aims to support future legislative recommendations with broader, updated insights. A work group will be formed to develop and distribute the survey by mid-summer, with results expected in the fall. Vice Chair M. Pease and others highlighted the importance of data-driven policy and encouraged community involvement in shaping the assessment. The project is in its early stages and will rely on collaboration and expertise to move forward.

- IX. Discussion: Pride Month - There was a discussion on preparations for Pride Month.
- A. Director Browning stated that the Commission staff maintains a public calendar of Pride events and encouraged Commissioners to represent the Commission at celebrations. A proposal was introduced to offer certificates of recognition to Pride event organizers, especially those who missed the deadline to request official citations from the Governor. These certificates would honor events that are free, open to the public, and aligned with LGBTQIA+ visibility, inclusion, equity, accessibility, and community engagement. The proposal received broad support, with Commissioners noting it as a meaningful way to connect with community organizations.
  - B. Commissioner Dunn made a motion to approve the document outlining the certificate and request process and it was seconded by Commissioner Zhāngsūn. There was no additional discussion and the motion unanimously passed.
- X. Open Forum for General Remarks or Comments: Commissioners made announcements and shared events and community concerns.
- XI. Closing Remarks: Chair Blinder closed the meeting by thanking commissioners for their dedication during difficult times, highlighting the power of their collective and individual efforts. They noted there will be no June meeting, with the next session being the in-person strategic planning retreat on July 19, 2025. Commissioner Bell was recognized and thanked for his service as he prepares to step down.
- XII. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 7:24 by Chair Blinder

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Special Assistant, Taylor Harer