

Bill Number (House 5611) In support

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Bill Number(s): House 5611

Viewpoint: For

Introduction

My name is Yassin Abdou, and I am here today to express my strong support for legislation pending that would require certain public facilities throughout our state to install height-adjustable, adult-sized changing tables in restrooms. This issue transcends convenience—it is about dignity, safety, and equitable inclusion for individuals with disabilities.

I am currently a student at the Met High School, and I have had the opportunity to intern at Tokwotton Nursing Home. During my time there, I gained firsthand experience in providing care for individuals with disabilities, including assisting with changing diapers and ensuring that residents were comfortable and safe. This experience opened my eyes to the crucial need for accessible facilities that accommodate people of all abilities, and I am passionate about advocating for a solution that will make a tangible difference in the lives of those who need it most.

The Role of Accessible Changing Facilities

All human beings have the right to privacy, safety, and dignity during toileting. Unfortunately, even this most basic need is denied to individuals with disabilities and children because proper changing rooms are not provided. For those who need them, attendants have to change these individuals on the floors of restroom facilities, the trunks of vehicles, or other public spaces that are unhygienic.

Such experiences are not only unhygienic and undesirable—they are humiliating. This situation places an undue burden on families and individuals who already navigate a society full of physical and social barriers. No one should have to endure such humiliations just because of the

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lack of infrastructure that is open to everyone. This bill is a good time to do something about that.

Legislative Requirements

The proposed bill calls for public buildings that are either newly constructed or have undergone extensive renovations to include at least one height-adjustable, adult-sized changing table in a publicly accessible bathroom. These tables must meet standards of safety, durability, and versatility to serve users of all shapes and mobility levels.

By making this requirement part of new building projects and major renovations, the bill ensures that accessibility is built in—not an afterthought, but a fundamental aspect of public space design.

Definitions

To give context to this discussion, the following things that define how important this is:

Adult-Sized Changing Table: A safe and secure surface large enough to fit a full-sized adult comfortably, frequently including guard rails and equipment to accommodate safe transfers.

Adjustable Height: An essential feature that allows the surface of the table to be elevated or depressed, making it easier and safer to use, especially for those coming from wheelchairs or other mobility devices.

Public Facility: Any structure accessible to the general public and owned, operated, or maintained by local or state government agencies—e.g., libraries, community centers, parks, sports complexes, museums, and transit facilities.

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Implementation Timeline

The bill outlines a clear and realistic timeline for implementation. It mandates that accessible changing tables be installed in all new public buildings and those undergoing major reconstruction after a specified date. This ensures that future public facilities are accessible from the outset, while providing existing buildings with an opportunity to make their facilities accessible during scheduled renovations.

Broader Impacts of the Bill

The passage of this bill could lead to significant, beneficial change:

Restoring Dignity and Privacy: Individuals with disabilities will no longer be forced into unsafe and degrading situations just to attend to their basic needs.

Supporting Families and Caregivers: Caregivers will have access to appropriate infrastructure that reduces both physical strain and mental stress.

Fostering True Inclusion: By removing this major barrier, we will be closer to creating a society where everyone—regardless of ability—is able to fully participate in public life.

Enhancing Public Health and Safety: Providing sanitary and safe facilities will reduce the risks of infection and harm that can arise from makeshift changing practices.

What should be a simple visit to a museum, park, or library often becomes an emotionally exhausting experience for many families. This bill offers a chance to rewrite that narrative, providing the comfort and respect that most of us take for granted.

Conclusion

I strongly urge legislative action in passing this bill. It is a crucial step toward a more compassionate, inclusive, and accessible society. No human being should be denied dignity and security simply because of their disability.

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Thank you for listening and for considering the voices and needs of persons with disabilities.

Sincerely,
Yassin Abdou