

STATEMENT OF

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U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND
GOVERNMENT REFORM

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Good morning, Chairman Towns, Ranking Member Issa, and members of this Committee. My name is Robert A. Peck, Commissioner for the General Services Administration's (GSA's) Public Buildings Service. Thank you for inviting me to appear before you today to discuss H.R. 4869, the "Restroom Gender Parity in Federal Buildings Act."

GSA supports restroom gender parity. We strive to provide welcoming, easily accessible, and comfortable facilities, including restrooms, for our Federal workforce and visitors. When constructing, modernizing, and leasing buildings, we continually improve our buildings to meet the changing needs of our building population.

GSA is one of 30 landholding agencies in the U.S. Government, providing space for more than 1 million Federal employees and contractors. As this Committee is aware, GSA has an aging portfolio. The average age for a GSA building is 46 years. GSA has over 500 buildings that were built before 1950, during a time in which there were fewer women in the workforce. Through modernization and new construction efforts, GSA has continued to improve our facilities as our customers' needs have changed. GSA is pleased to work with this Committee on this issue.

***Federally-Owned Facilities* – GSA publishes a Facilities Standards document that establishes design standards and criteria for new construction and major and minor alterations in GSA buildings, largely derived from industry standards including the International Code Council. This document also applies to lease constructed buildings with Government Options to Purchase. GSA's application of these continually evolving standards has moved us closer to achieving the goal of restroom gender parity. Since the early 1980s, our standards have cited the number of toilets, including urinals, required in men's and women's restrooms. In most instances, the number of toilets, or water closets, in women's restrooms equals the number of toilets and urinals in men's restrooms. In assembly areas, such as training or conference facilities, GSA's Facilities Standards require more toilets in women's restrooms than men's restrooms. Specifically, GSA requires three women's toilets per every two men's toilets and/or urinals.**

The application of the GSA Facilities Standards is mandatory and the provisions of this document are included as design requirements in every GSA contract with design professionals. These provisions apply to all stages of design and construction from project development through construction completion.

Leased Facilities – In addition to federally-owned buildings, this proposed legislation directs Federal procurement executives to give preference in leasing facilities that meet or exceed female to male toilets ratio (including urinals) of 1 to 1. GSA’s standard Solicitation for Offer (SFO) for leasing requires lessors to provide toilet fixtures based on the ratio of men and women that will occupy the leased space. These requirements allow GSA to continually meet our customers’ changing needs.

GSA supports improving the quality and equality in restrooms through easily accessible, comfortable, and welcoming restroom facilities. The issue of gender parity should be addressed as we undertake future construction, modernization, and leasing actions. GSA supports gender parity and the intent of this bill to provide equality for women in all aspects of the Federal workplace.

Thank you for inviting me to appear before you today, and we look forward to working with this committee on addressing this issue.