

HB1204  
The Inclusive Schools Act  
02/26/2020  
Ways & Means Committee  
Support

To the Honorable Anne R. Kaiser and esteemed members of the committee:

My name is Dr. Elyse Pine, and I live in Howard County. I am the Trans Youth Lead Physician of the Gender Journeys of Youth Program at Chase Brexton Health Care. Chase Brexton Health Care serves over 4000 transgender and gender diverse individuals, over 400 are under the age of 18.

I'm writing to urge you to support the inclusive Schools Act, SB993.

I believe that every Maryland student deserves to go to the school where they are free from bullying, harassment, and discrimination. I have seen patients who have suffered from bullying in their schools and turned to homeschooling when they felt there was inadequate support from the administration.

According to the GLSEN 2017 School Climate Survey, approximately a quarter of LGBTQ students (23%) in Maryland were disciplined for public displays of affection (PDA) that did not result in similar action for non-LGBTQ students. If a 15 year old boy is allowed to hug a girl, why should a 15 year old boy be disciplined for hugging a boy? 8% of students reported being unable to wear LGBTQ-supportive apparel and 7% being unable to bring a same gender date to a school dance. Fewer than 1 in 5 (18%) attended a school with a comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment policy that included specific protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression. Fewer than 1 in 5 (17%) had a policy or official guidelines to support transgender or gender nonconforming (trans/ GNC) students. These protections are basic rights due to every student in Maryland.

I urge you to vote in support of the bill.

Sincerely,

Elyse Pine, MD  
Gender JOY Lead Physician  
Chase Brexton Healthcare  
Gender Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

1111 N.Charles Street  
Baltimore MD 21201  
410-837-2050 x 1056