



Bill No: HB691
Title: Legally Protected Health Care - Gender-Affirming Treatment
Committee: Health and Government Operations
Hearing: February 21, 2024
Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) is a statewide coalition of women’s groups and individuals formed to provide a non-partisan, independent voice for Maryland women and families. MLAW’s purpose is to advocate for legislation affecting women and families. To accomplish this goal, MLAW creates an annual legislative agenda with issues voted on by MLAW members and endorsed by organizations and individuals from all over Maryland. **HB691 - Legally Protected Health Care - Gender-Affirming Treatment** is a priority on the [2024 MLAW Agenda](#) and we urge your support.

With the passage of HB691, healthcare workers who provide gender-affirming care will be legally protected, which ensures they will be able to continue providing high-quality healthcare to all women and transgender people.

There is a nationwide rise in threats against gender-affirming care (GAC) providers and patients just like the ones against abortion providers, coming from the same regressive, extremist forces that do not align with the values of a vast majority of Marylanders. As gender-affirming care becomes criminalized in other states, we can expect to see more out-of-state transgender patients traveling to Maryland for gender-affirming healthcare. Like abortion care, access to gender-affirming care touches on core issues of personal autonomy, and it is essential that we ensure that all Marylanders have a right to direct their healthcare.

Last year, the MDGA passed shielding legislation for reproductive care providers (SB859/ HB808). That bill was a victory and a step in the right direction, however, the shield we handed our abortion care providers has holes in it. We aim to build upon last year’s great victory with our bill by extending those same protections to gender-affirming care providers and patients. Most abortion care providers in Maryland also provide gender-affirming care, and transgender people deserve access to lifesaving, medically necessary healthcare to be legally protected. When we protect reproductive care but not gender-affirming care, we’re still leaving abortion care providers at risk. This can reduce access to abortion in Maryland. The effects would be devastating, especially as we’re already facing a staffing crisis in healthcare.

In addition to going after providers and patients, there have been attempts in other states to prevent parents from being able to assist their children in accessing gender-affirming care. So, in addition to protecting women seeking care, it is imperative that Maryland protect mothers who are helping their children access essential health care.

If passed, transgender women will have the legal protections they need to access lifesaving, medically necessary gender-affirming healthcare. Gender-affirming care is critical and necessary for trans women because “passing” helps to vastly reduce the gender-based violence that targets trans women, improves mental health outcomes for trans women by reducing suicide rates and depression, and alleviates other types of discrimination.

For these reasons, MLAW strongly urges the passage of HB691.

Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women
102 W. Pennsylvania Avenue, Suite 100 • Towson, MD 21204 • 443-519-1005 phone/fax
mdlegagenda4women@yahoo.com • www.mdlegagendaforwomen.org

MLAW 2024 Supporting Organizations

The following organizations have signed on in support of our 2024 Legislative Agenda:

1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East
AAUW Anne Arundel County
AAUW Garrett Branch
AAUW Kensington-Rockville Branch
AAUW Maryland
Adolescent Single Parent Program (PGCPS)
Anne Arundel County Commission for Women
Anne Arundel County NOW
Baltimore County Commission for Women
Black Women for Positive Change, Baltimore Chapter
Bound for Better, Advocates for Domestic Violence
Bound for Better, advocates for Domestic Violence
Business & Professional Women/Maryland
Center for Infant & Child Loss
Child Justice, Inc.
Church Women United, Inc.
Climate XChange Maryland
Court Watch Montgomery
CTLDomGroup Inc
DABS Consulting, LLC
Engage Mountain Maryland
Frederick County Commission For Women
If/When/How at University of Baltimore School of Law
Lee Law, LLC
Les Etoiles in Haiti
Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Maryland Legislative Coalition
Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence
Maryland WISE Women
Miller Partnership Consultants
MomsRising
Montgomery County Alumnae Chapter, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
Montgomery County NOW
National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc., Anne Arundel County Chapter
National Organization for Women, Maryland Chapter
Rebuild, Overcome, and Rise (ROAR) Center at UMB
REHarrington Plumbing and Heating
Reproductive Justice Maryland
Stella's Girls Inc
The Federation of Jewish Women's Organizations of Maryland
The Hackerman Foundation
The Relentless Feminist
The Salvation Army Catherine's Cottage
Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc., Patuxent River
Top Ladies of Distinction, Prince George's County
TurnAround Inc.
University System of Maryland Women's Forum
Women of Action Maryland
Women's Equity Center and Action Network (WE CAN)
Women's Law Center of Maryland
Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporate - Alpha Zeta Chapter
Zonta Club of Annapolis

Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women

102 W. Pennsylvania Avenue, Suite 100 - Towson, MD 21204 - 443-519-1005 phone/fax
mdlegagenda4women@yahoo.com - www.mdlegagendaforwomen.org