

Ezra Towne

3010 Blueridge Ave
Silver Spring, MD 20902

703.609.1092
ezra.towne@gmail.com

Favorable Testimony on Bill HB0691: Legally Protected Health Care - Gender-Affirming Treatment

February 19, 2024

Chair Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Delegate Bonnie Cullison, and esteemed members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

I write to you today as a transmasculine nonbinary adult invested in the well-being of transgender and nonbinary people that need of gender affirming healthcare in the state of Maryland. I am also a facilitator of a trans-led peer support group in Montgomery County. **My testimony on this bill is favorable, and I urge you to move this bill promptly through committee with a favorable vote.**

HB0691 codifies the protections granted by Governor Wes Moore's executive order declaring Maryland a sanctuary state for those in need of gender-affirming healthcare. This executive order established Maryland's reputation as a safe place for trans and nonbinary people to come for the health care they desperately need - but cannot access in their state of residency due to anti-trans legislation.

I applaud Wes Moore for his executive order, but ask that the state of Maryland go above and beyond that executive order - which can be easily undone when his term ends if an anti-trans governor should become elected into office.

Transgender and nonbinary Marylanders, as well as those who must seek healthcare outside of their state of residency, deserve access to this critical, life saving health care permanently. There is a wave of anti-trans healthcare law being implemented across the country right now. Our state cannot afford to take the risk of failing to make our status as a sanctuary state LAW.

I respectfully ask for a favorable report on HB0691 by the Health and Government Operations committee, so that the bill can move forth to the floor of the House of Delegates for a vote.

Sincerely,



Ezra Towne
District 18