



**Montgomery County Federation of Families for
Children's Mental Health, Inc.**

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HB 691 Legally Protected Health Care - Gender-Affirming Treatment

House Health and Government Operations Committee

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POSITION: SUPPORT

I am Celia Serkin, Executive Director of the Montgomery County Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, Inc. (MC Federation of Families), a family peer support organization serving diverse families in Montgomery County who have children, youth, and/or young adults with mental health, substance use, or co-occurring challenges. Our Certified Family Peer Specialists are parents who have raised or are currently raising children with mental health, substance use, and/or co-occurring challenges. I am a Montgomery County resident. I have two children, now adults. My son has severe depression. My daughter has co-occurring challenges.

MC Federation of Families is pleased to support **HB 691 Legally Protected Health Care - Gender-Affirming Treatment**.

HB 691 will alter the definition of "legally protected health care" to include certain gender-affirming treatment, including medications and supplies, for the purposes of certain provisions of law that prohibit health occupations disciplinary actions and certain actions in criminal and civil proceedings and the use of certain resources in furtherance of certain investigations and proceedings related to legally protected health care.

Last legislative session the General Assembly passed and Governor Moore signed into law the Trans Health Equity Act, which established that the State of Maryland rightfully considers Gender-Affirming Care as lifesaving and medically necessary; and the Reproductive Health Protection Act, which protects abortion care providers, patients, and supporters from criminal and civil penalties from other states where that care is criminalized. Unfortunately, protections for Gender-Affirming Care were not included in the Reproductive Health Protection Act last year, despite the rise in criminalization of Gender-Affirming Care.

MC Federation of Families supports HB 691 because it will make the technical fix needed to ensure that this life-saving care remains protected in our state and Maryland continues to be a safe haven for transgender people. The same shielding provisions that apply to reproductive care will apply to gender-affirming care, including:

- Shielding consumers, providers, and support individuals from extradition for gender-affirming care provided in Maryland.
- Prohibiting Maryland agencies and law enforcement from assisting with out-of-state investigations of gender-affirming care legally protected in Maryland.

- Prohibiting occupational boards from disciplining a licensed or certified individual over out-of-state complaints for gender-affirming care.

The bill does not change the type of care that someone can access or who can provide that care. It simply protects the gender-affirming care that is currently legal and provided in Maryland.

MC Federation of Families urges this committee to pass HB 691.