



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 691
Legally Protected Health Care - Gender-Affirming Treatment
Before the Health and Government Operations Committee
By Lyla Martin, Intern, Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative
February 21, 2024**

Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice-Chair Cullison, and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 691 on behalf of Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative, a nonprofit advocacy organization with a mission to ensure access to quality, affordable health care. Special thank you to Delegate Moon and Delegate Martinez for sponsoring this legislation. We strongly support HB 691 to protect gender-affirming care and establish Maryland as a safe haven for transgender people. As it stands now, gender-affirming care is not included in the definition of "legally protected healthcare." Twenty-two states so far have enacted bans on gender affirming care.¹ Our neighbors, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia, have either banned or proposed bans on gender affirming care. HB 691 would make Maryland a safe-haven by ensuring that access to gender affirming care is protected from out-of-state litigation, as eleven states and the District of Columbia have already done. With HB 691 Maryland can become a more equitable and inclusive state. We strongly urge a favorable report on HB 691 and thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.

¹<https://www.hrc.org/resources/attacks-on-gender-affirming-care-by-state-map>

