

Good morning ladies and gentlemen of the legislature. My name is Anil Chaudhry and I am a resident of Montgomery County, Maryland where my daughters attend high school, middle school, and elementary school. I am also a combat veteran who suffered from mild traumatic brain injuries as well as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder due to my service to my country. I am taking the time to provide my testimony today because I strongly oppose Senate Bill 611 and its companion House Bill 782 because I believe it will substitute the state's judgment for that of a competent parent.

I oppose the bill because as a parent I do not believe that minors under the age of 16 have the same capacity as an adult understand the implications of consenting to consultation, diagnosis, and treatment of mental or emotional disorders by a health care professional. Obtaining appropriate healthcare, is very complicated, and obtaining appropriate mental healthcare is even more – I know that from personal experience. Many psychotropic drugs have many latent and patent side effects that are not readily understandable unless a complete and detailed family history of contraindications is appropriately captured by the mental health care professional. I ask you today – how many 10 year old's know their family medical history?

I further oppose this bill because it gives an unaccountable bureaucrat and a stranger the power to withhold treatment information about my child's health from me which could have many unintended consequences. These include a loss of life or severe allergic reaction to drugs prescribed by our family's designated healthcare professional who unknowingly prescribes medication to my child that reacts with medication that no one in my family or medical team knows my child is taking.

Finally, this bill would actually cause real harm to the constituents that it is intending to protect. Specifically, the provision of the bill that calls for a physician who may never see the minor again has the authority to "decide whether a parent should receive information about the treatment needed by the minor" who is suffering from a mental or emotional disorder that requires medical attention. I ask members of this fine institution – how am I as a parent supposed to help my child if I don't know when they are supposed to take their medications? Especially medications, that if not appropriately dosed, can increase risks of suicidal ideations and other emotional disorders.

Therefore, I implore you to also oppose these ill thought out and poorly reasoned bills because they have the potential to cause serious harm and possibly serious medical risk to minors. These are bills that are trying to solve problems that do not exist and only serve to insert unaccountable government officials between children and their parents, and also between families and their faith based practices.

Thank you once again for allowing me to express my opinions regarding these bills. I look forward to hearing that these bills will not receive any more consideration from the legislature.