

Testimony in Support of SB 682
Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Gender-Affirming Treatment
Trans Health Equity Act of 2022
Senate Finance Committee
February 22, 2022

Testimony of Milo Reynolds-Dominguez
Montgomery County, Maryland

Chair Kelley and Members of the Committee,

I am a first-year law student at the University of Maryland; a musician and small-business owner in this state; and my spouse-to-be's family has been living in this state for over 80 years. I am also a transgender Puerto Rican woman. I deeply care about this state and came here to study the law so I could make a difference in my communities. **That is why I urge you to support SB 682.**

This bill is about healthcare equity for a doubly vulnerable population. It would provide up-to-date, medically necessary care to trans Marylanders who cannot afford private insurance—a small population with a great need. The state could champion these people and send a message that **every** citizen has a right to quality healthcare. **This is (or should be) a non-partisan issue.** The bill will also modernize the standards of care Maryland uses to treat trans people; currently, the state's guidelines are 20 years old. **It could join the likes of Virginia, Alaska, Colorado, Oregon, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Washington State, California, New York, and D.C., among others, in doing the right thing and provide support for some of its most vulnerable constituents.**

Other testimony will articulate statistics and fiscal arguments much better than mine; my understanding is that this legislation will help Maryland save on down-stream costs incurred from this population's use of physical/mental health services and public resources devoted to stopping housing and employment discrimination they face. Costs incurred after the passage of this bill are federally reimbursable, further lowering the burden on the state's resources. Gender-affirming care for transgender people dramatically increases our mental health and wellbeing. Many organizations—including the American Medical Association, the American Psychiatric Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics—support this healthcare approach. From financial, public health, and moral standpoints, this bill does so much good for a vulnerable population at a very low cost.

On a personal level, gender-affirming care has quite literally saved my life. It helped me overcome depression and suicidal ideation brought on by my gender dysphoria. And even though the wider culture is still very hostile to people like me, access to this healthcare has helped me rise above the vitriol with dignity. Since starting my transition, I find that I am a much more hopeful, driven person. I can express myself through my music more authentically and vibrantly; my professional ambitions and goals feel more defined and attainable; and I even feel more connected with the beauty of the natural world around me every day. To put it simply: gender-affirming care has changed my life for the better in innumerable ways. The State of Maryland should expand access to those who need this care but who simply cannot afford it without assistance. To do otherwise is, in my opinion, immoral, wrong, and illogical from a public policy standpoint.

I strongly urge you to support SB 682.

Thank you for your consideration,

Milo Reynolds-Dominguez (she/her/hers)
UMD Law, Class of 2024
Cornell University, Class of 2020
Sphinx Head Society, 2019-2020
Pet Names Music LLC, partner