

I am writing in support of SB 460, the Trans Health Equity Act, to ensure that every trans person in the state of Maryland has access to gender affirming care. I have seen the necessity of gender affirming care to change and save lives, through my own life and those of many of my friends and loved ones. I have watched depressed, miserable wretches turn into vibrant, happy people, and I have done the same myself. I have also, sadly, seen trans people who were unable to access care, and watched them fall apart.

In the summer after I graduated college, I lived with a St. John's student named Augustine Stuart. Augustine struggled greatly through his freshman year, owing largely to his inability to access testosterone treatment. He was an intelligent, clever and creative thinker and artist; his art was once a constant presence in the college coffee shop. He could now be having a successful junior year were he not so burdened by gender dysphoria. Instead, he received four unsatisfactory don rags – the equivalent of failing a class at St. John's – and was not permitted to advance to sophomore year.

Over that summer, he was constantly suicidal and unable to hold a job. On two occasions, I directly intervened in his suicide attempts – once grabbing him as he tried to run into traffic, and later wrestling a knife from his hands. At one point I personally kept him on a nonstop 72 hour suicide watch. Eventually, as I and our other roommate were unable to continue to take care of him while ourselves working to cover both our expenses and his, he had to move home to his family in Colorado. He has not forgiven me for preventing his suicide, and I have heard nothing from him since – I hope that he is doing better.

This entire situation could have been avoided with the Trans Health Equity Act. Right now, Augustine could have been studying Locke, Baudelaire, Faraday and Lobachevski, surrounded by brilliant minds who he could both enrich and be enriched by. He could be well on his way to a promising career in academia. I could still have a friend, and St. John's could have a student who makes the campus a brighter place. On behalf of Augustine Stuart, I urge the Commission to pass SB 460, and contribute to human thriving in the state of Maryland.