

**Testimony in Support of HB 283**  
Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Gender-Affirming Treatment  
Trans Health Equity Act of 2023  
Health and Government Operations Committee  
February 14, 2023

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Chair Peña-Melnik and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the chance to testify in support of House Bill 283. My name is Rachel Stemme. I am a resident of District 46. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 283, the Trans Health Equity Act, which would expand Maryland Medicaid to cover lifesaving gender-affirming care.

The Trans Health Equity Act (THEA) addresses a critical gap in the healthcare of transgender Marylanders by ensuring Medicaid coverage for gender-affirming healthcare. Currently, Maryland Medicaid excludes many gender-affirming procedures. There is consensus in the medical community that these procedures are medically necessary and reduce suicide, abuse, discrimination, and harassment. THEA is a low-cost solution that improves the quality of life of trans Marylanders, brings Maryland Medicaid into compliance with federal law, and meets current medical standards.

I believe that HB 283 is important because trans people deserve access to gender-affirming care. I have seen firsthand the impact this care makes on the mental health of trans patients by providing them with the resources and specialists who can support them in their journey. We have premiere healthcare institutions who offer this care here, yet Maryland is behind the times in covering it with insurance. Passing this bill shows support for the world-class institutions and physicians working to support this vulnerable patient population.

Please stop the discrimination and support trans patients.

Thank you for your consideration,

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