



Ella Ennis, Legislative Chairman
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The Honorable Joseline Pena-Melnyk, Chairman
And Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee
Maryland House of Delegates

Re: **SB0460** – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Gender-Affirming Treatment (Trans Health Equity Act) –
OPPOSED

Dear Chairman Pena-Melnyk and Committee Members,

The Maryland Federation of Republican Women strongly oppose SB 460 (1) because it does not protect vulnerable, impressionable children and teens from permanent damage from puberty blockers or cross-sex hormones and irreversible mutilating surgery to remove their health reproductive organs and preclude them from later in life choosing to naturally reproduce – a most basic human desire. (2) Additional and costly benefits under SB 460 that would be available for gender affirming treatment that are not available for cancer patients.

The Revised Fiscal Note -Additional Comments: MDH notes that fertility preservation services are currently not covered for Medicaid participants for any reason. Expanding coverage for this service for gender-affirmation purposes may lead to pressure to cover the benefit for other populations, such as those with cancer. Provision of fertility preservation services for all Medicaid participants could significantly increase costs (an estimated \$8.1 million annually based on 0.07% of total enrollment utilizing the services). MDH advises that the bill creates a new appropriateness standard for review of adverse benefit decisions for gender-affirming services. MDH would be prohibited from issuing an adverse benefit determination denying or limiting access to gender-affirming treatment unless a health care provider with experience prescribing or delivering gender-affirming treatment has reviewed and confirmed the appropriateness of the adverse benefit determination. Given the limited number of specialists in this area, it is unclear whether there is a sufficient network of providers for this process. If a sufficient network is not available for review, enforcement of medical necessity criteria will not be feasible.”

It is absolutely unfair, unjust and unequal to propose to provide fertility preservation services and plastic surgery changes to enhance body and facial image for personal gender affirming choices but deny them to patients suffering from cancer, or burns or other causes.

SB 460 does not distinguish between an adult who has made a mature and considered decision and a child or teen who has been influenced and encouraged to declare themselves as “trans” through social media peer-groups or confirming counseling where a licensed counselor or physician “confirms” the child’s self-diagnosis. Seldom is balanced counseling that looks at the underlying causes of sexual dysphoria undertaken.



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Every person, regardless of biological gender, sexual preference or chosen gender identity, deserves respect and the opportunity to pursue their goals in life. Adults have the right to choose life-altering gender reassignment surgery; however, children need to be protected from powerful drugs such as puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones that render them sterile and mutilating surgery that remove their healthy reproductive organs. Puberty blockers can also adversely affect bone strength and the brain.

It is widely recognized that the human brain is still developing until about age 25, which is why juveniles are not held to the same level of responsibility for serious crimes committed under age 18. For these same reasons, a child under 18 should not be able to submit to actions that permanently remove their ability to reproduce and become parents. SB 460 will negatively affect the two-parent family as a basic unit of society.

The movement to promote transgender “coming out” and counseling and treatment is a very lucrative financial endeavor for numerous professions. It is unconscionable to allow these treatments and surgeries to be performed on anyone under 21 or at least 18 years of age. Recent changes to Maryland law reduced the age from 16 years to 12 years of age that a child is considered mature enough to consent to mental health counseling and treatment on their own. For all of the above reasons, please either amend SB 460 to exclude anyone under 21 years of age or vote an **UNFAVORABLE** report for **SB 460**.

Sincerely,
Ella Ennis