

**Testimony in Support of HB0283**

Maryland Medical Assistance Program: Gender-Affirming Treatment  
Trans Health Equity Act of 2023  
Health and Government Operations Committee  
February 10th, 2023

Calvin Schuster  
District 46

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice Chair Kelly, and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 283. My name is Calvin Schuster and I am a medical student at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. One of the first lessons I learned during my medical education is the importance of equitable access to care, particularly for marginalized patient populations that are already facing health disparities. HB0283 addresses a critical issue of health inequity that currently exists in Maryland: lack of access to medically necessary gender-affirming care. Maryland Medicaid is denying coverage for many critically important gender-affirmation care services, and by doing so is going against the modern standard of care recommendations as outlined by professional organizations such as the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) and as decided directly between patients and their providers. As a medical student, I have been able to speak with healthcare professionals at Hopkins and beyond over the past many months, and these conversations with my mentors, educators, and other physician advocates have shown me the overwhelming support of current healthcare providers for this bill. It is vital to address this inequity to further the overall health of our community.

Along with being a medical student, I am also a transgender man, and I have experienced first-hand the importance of gender-affirming care in my own life. Being able to access all of the care that myself and my providers deemed medically necessary for my own transition has improved my quality of life drastically. Accessing care has enabled me to live authentically as myself, to focus on my education, and to become an active and thriving member of my community. If I were unable to access the care that I needed, I am confident that I would not have made it to where I am today.

To deny your transgender neighbors, family, friends, and loved ones this critically important care is to deny them the opportunity to live fully and authentically as themselves. It is to perpetuate unnecessary suffering by enabling discriminatory medical inequity and going against the recommendations of modern medicine. Supporting HB0283 will help bring Maryland inline with current, scientifically-supported and evidence-based standards of care. Please consider supporting HB0283 to help create a happier, healthier, and more equitable Maryland.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Calvin Schuster

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