

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Cameron LaFortune. I am a resident of District 7. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB119, Legally Protected Healthcare - Gender-Affirming Treatment, which would add gender-affirming care to the definition of legally protected healthcare in Maryland. I want my home to be a place that is safe for other people to live in. I hope that others do not feel the need to flee their homes to survive, but if they do, I want Maryland to be one of the places they can go to. And I want people everywhere, in Maryland, in the U.S., and even around the world, to know that things are not going to get worse forever, that there are still people who are fighting to preserve and reclaim the rights we should all enjoy, and that there is some hope worth sticking around for. One of the greatest consequences to a lack of access to gender affirming care is suicide. I've heard a prominent trans person say that the alternative to care is death. And I know that while the rate of suicide for trans people is staggering, it plummets when they have even one person or one place that is accepting and supportive of them. Maryland should strive to be such a place. This bill is a a blow against the hopelessness that many people are feeling. It is a demonstration that there are still people willing to fight and able to win a future where trans people can exist. I hope it helps folks make it until that day. I urge you to support SB119. Thank you for your time.