

February 14, 2024

Written Testimony: Senator Lam, Re SB0119

I am writing in support of the bill to extend medical benefits and protections to individuals in need of medical care that is relevant to their transgender health conditions. I have first-hand knowledge of the needs of such individuals and want to advocate for providing all the medical care and support they require.

I am the parent of a teenager [17] who is non-binary, that is, does not identify as male or female. My child had always been active, intellectually and socially involved, was funny, had many friends. However, they went through a very difficult time at age 13, when my spouse and I feared that we would lose them. A sudden change happened and they did not get out of bed for weeks at a time, were not communicative, were extremely depressed and not functional. We tried to intervene with providing mental health care as well as medications, but for months there was no improvement. We stayed close to our child, letting them know that we were there for them and needed to know how we could help, that we would do our best to help them feel better.

Months into this horrific time, our child wanted to speak to us. They revealed that they did not identify as a girl and did not want to live as a girl; they would rather die. [We have learned since that they had become self-destructive and self-harming.] We knew that we needed to provide any and all support to alleviate our child's distress. We wanted them to live and to thrive, but they were very far from that. We committed to learn as much as we could about this condition, to provide information and a way through this awful time. We did research, spoke with many professionals and other parents. We identified a pediatric endocrinologist who met with our child for an initial consultation followed by carefully managed medical care that helped our child out of the abyss and into a more hopeful place.

My child is thriving today: they are creative, doing well academically, are very social again, and they planning travel abroad and internships with the National Parks. They are excited about life. They are emotionally healthy! If we did not have the resources to pursue treatment, there is no doubt in my mind that my child would not be alive today. I am thankful that I live in a state that affirms the value of every individual and goes to lengths to ensure that their rights are protected. Please do all you can to ensure that we continue to be humane and supportive of those who need us the most: teenagers, young adults and others who face rejection from many directions and must have support from us.

Thank you.



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