

Senate Bill 119
Legally Protected Health Care - Gender-Affirming Treatment
February 15, 2024
Support

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

My name is Audrey Gross. I am a resident of District 1D. 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.

This bill matters to me because I have both personal and professional experience caring for transgender individuals.

My sister is transgender. I assisted in my sister's post-operative recovery experience after she had gender affirming surgery. I have witnessed firsthand how receiving gender affirming care has improved her mental health tremendously. She is extremely satisfied with her results and has no regrets. Had she not received this treatment, I believe she would still be suffering with body dysmorphia and depression that would be negatively affecting her personal and professional life. Gender affirming care for transgender individuals saves lives that could otherwise be lost to depression and suicide. I feel blessed that my sister was able to receive the treatment she needed. Going through this experience together brought us closer as a family. Now my sister is a happy and healthy mother to two beautiful children and a successful economist.

I have also cared for many transgender individuals in need of medical care as a Nurse Practitioner. I think having a provider that respects and understands where they are coming from has made a huge impact on these patients' lives. I felt happy to serve this patient population as a provider and believe they have a right to safe and protected care. Providers should feel legally safe providing necessary medical care to all patients in need, including transgender individuals. Transgender should also feel legally protected when they receive the medical care they need.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB119.

Thank you,

Audrey Gross, DNP, CRNP, AGACNP-BC, FNP-BC