



Senate Bill 119
Legally Protected Health Care - Gender-Affirming Treatment
March 20, 2024
Support

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

Organization: The Jewish Community Relations Council, Howard County, MD

Submitting: Laura Salganik and Betsy Singer, co-chairs

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: March 20, 2024

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Howard County (JCRC) is submitting this testimony in support of SB119.

SB119/HB691 is a technical fix to the Reproductive Health Protection Act passed in 2023. The Howard County JCRC supported that act last year, and we are supporting the inclusion of gender-affirming healthcare this year.

It is an important tenet of justice in Judaism that everyone should have a safe place to live. Those whose gender identity is non cisgender male or female have been recognized by Jewish leaders for 2,000 years. In the 3rd Century the Talmud includes a discussion that begins, "An androgynous, who presents both male and female physical traits, is in some ways like men and in some ways like women. In some ways, they are like both men and women, and in other ways, like neither men nor women." (Bikkurim 4:1) A safe place today for those not identifying as cisgender is consistent with religious practice going back millennia.

We are also commanded twice in the bible (Exodus 23:5 and Deuteronomy 22:4) to relieve the burden of anyone we encounter, even one considered an enemy, and even if they are traveling along the road. This provides strong support for making sure we can support those traveling from elsewhere who are in need of our support.

SB119 would

- Shield consumers, providers, and support individuals from extradition for gender-affirming care provided in Maryland;
- Prohibit Maryland agencies and law enforcement from assisting with out-of-state investigators of gender-affirming care legally protected in Maryland;
- Prohibit occupational boards from disciplining a licensed or certified individual over out-of-state

complaints for gender-affirming care.

Passage of SB119 would assure that Maryland remains a safe place for some of the most vulnerable members of our society, and those who assist them. Our neighboring states of Ohio, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania have proposed bans on gender-affirming care. This is likely to increase the need for these services in Maryland, making this law a necessary addition for Maryland. Let us join the 11 other states (and the District of Columbia) with similar shield laws for gender-affirming care.

We urge you to pass SB119, Legally Protected Health Care - Gender-Affirming Treatment.