



**Maryland Commission
on LGBTQIA+ Affairs**

**TESTIMONY OF DIRECTOR JEREMY BROWNING
COMMISSIONER, MARYLAND COMMISSION ON LGBTQIA+ AFFAIRS
UNFAVORABLE STATEMENT ON HB0065
PUBLIC SCHOOLS - MEDICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL TREATMENT
IN SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH**

March 13, 2024

Health and Government Operations Committee

The Hon. Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair
The Hon. Bonnie Cullison, Vice Chair

Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice-Chair Cullison, and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee, my name is Jeremy Browning(he/him), and I am the Director of the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs. The Commission was created by the 2021 Maryland General Assembly, and later altered in 2023, to assess challenges facing our LGBTQIA+ communities, establish best practices and recommendations for LGBTQIA+ inclusion, and provide testimony to legislative and administrative bodies.

The Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs is in strong opposition to House Bill 65 which would require school-based medical and psychological healthcare providers to share certain information to student's parents or guardians. While the intention of ensuring parental involvement in their child's medical and psychological care is understandable, the Commission is deeply concerned that the provisions of this bill risk the safety, well-being, and rights of LGBTQIA+ students.

For many queer and transgender children, K-12 schools are places where they can seek affirming support for their physical, mental, and emotional health. House Bill 65 would require healthcare providers to out LGBTQIA+ students to their parents without their consent, potentially jeopardizing the mental health and physical safety of LGBTQIA+ children whose parents may not be accepting of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) explains that “Children and adults have a constitutional right not to have intimate facts about their lives disclosed without their consent.” Forced outing bills, like House Bill 65, are designed to do exactly that: reveal private information about trans students, regardless of whether the student consents or whether they may suffer negative or harmful consequences at school or at home from that disclosure.

Forced outing bills do nothing to strengthen families, protect children, or encourage students to seek mental health support in schools. Rather, these bills hurt students, educators, and the systems purposefully put in place to support the mental health of children and youth. Simply put, bills such as these hurt kids especially those that may be transgender, gender non-conforming, or questioning their gender identity or sexual orientation.

As a result of the severe risk of harm posed by the possible passage of House Bill 65, the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs urges an unfavorable report.

REFERENCES:

Seldin, H. (2023, January 26). Trans students should be treated with dignity, not outed by their schools. American Civil Liberties Union.
<https://www.aclu.org/news/lgbt-rights/trans-students-should-be-treated-with-dignity-not-outed-by-their-schools/>