



**Maryland Commission  
on LGBTQIA+ Affairs**

**TESTIMONY OF M PEASE  
COMMISSIONER, MARYLAND COMMISSION ON LGBTQIA+ AFFAIRS**

**UNFAVORABLE STATEMENT ON HB0722  
HEALTH - MINORS - GENDER AND SEX TRANSITION PROCEDURES**

**February 21, 2024**

Health and Government Operations Committee

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

I am a scientist, clinician-in-training, and doctoral student in counseling psychology at the University of Maryland, College Park and today I write representing the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs in strong opposition to House Bill 722. This bill singles out one form of critical, lifesaving form of healthcare which, per evidence-based standards of care set by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH), already follows strict ethical principles of informed parental consent and youth assent in these deeply personal healthcare discussions.<sup>1</sup>

This bill is not necessary, and the message sent by this legislation – that gender-affirming care is somehow different from other forms of healthcare and is being forced upon young people by healthcare providers – is false and dangerous. Codifying that message into the law and contributing to a culture of fear and disinformation around trans experiences will only exacerbate the tremendous health disparities facing the trans community in this State.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Coleman, E., Radix, A. E., Bouman, W.P., Brown, G.R., de Vries, A. L. C., Deutsch, M. B., Ettner, R., Fraser, L., Goodman, M., Green, J., Hancock, A. B., Johnson, T. W., Karasic, D. H., Knudson, G. A., Leibowitz, S. F., Meyer-Bahlburg, H. F.L., Monstrey, S. J., Motmans, J., Nahata, L., ... Arcelus, J. (2022). Standards of Care for the Health of Transgender and Gender Diverse People, Version 8. *International Journal of Transgender Health*, 23(S1), S1-S260. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26895269.2022.2100644>

<sup>2</sup> The Trevor Project. (2022, December). *2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health: Maryland*. <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/The-Trevor-Project-2022-National-Survey-on-LGBTQ-Youth-Mental-Health-by-State-Maryland.pdf>

House Bill 722 would impose significant barriers to gender-affirming healthcare and directly undermines the rights and well-being of transgender, nonbinary, and gender-diverse youth. Research consistently finds that gender affirming care reduces depression and suicidality among trans youth and improves their life outcomes.<sup>3,4</sup> The youth of this State deserve to grow up with access to the best international standard of care for all forms of healthcare, including gender-affirming care.

The fact that this care exists and helps the youth of our state to live full, joyous, and authentic lives is beautiful. We should do everything we can to protect that, not open the door to criminalize it. As someone who is training to be a mental health clinician, I want to work in a system that provides a loving and safe environment for Marylanders of all ages to receive the care they need.

For these reasons, I, and the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs, urge an unfavorable report on this bill. Thank you.

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<sup>3</sup> Alberti, P. M., Alvarado, C. S., Bishop, M. D., Cassidy, D. M., Fish, J. N., Mallory, A. B., Moran, S. A., Piepbrink, S., & Ramsey, P. (2023, March). *To protect evidence-based medicine and promote health justice, protect gender-affirming medical care*. AAMC Center for Health Justice Policy Report. <https://aamchealthjustice.org/news/policy/gamc-trans-youth>

<sup>4</sup> Redfield, E., Conron, K. J., Tentindo, W., & Browning, E. (2023, March). *Prohibiting gender-affirming medical care for youth*. The Williams Institute. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Trans-Youth-Health-Bans-Mar-2023.pdf>