



The Maryland House of Delegates
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

The Honorable Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk

241 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

SPONSOR TESTIMONY- [HB1399](#)

Protect the Kids Act

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk, vice chair Cullison and members of the HGO committee,

House Bill [HB1399](#) would prohibit a licensed health care practitioner from prescribing, dispensing, or administering a cross-sex hormone or otherwise providing cross-sex hormone therapy for the treatment of certain mental health diagnoses to an individual who is a minor. Additionally, a person that violates this section is guilty of a felony and on conviction is subject to imprisonment not exceeding life.

Puberty is a critical time for growth and development, and starting hormone therapy before the onset of puberty can interfere with natural physical development. Cross-sex hormones (estrogen or testosterone) administered to prepubertal children would block the development of natural secondary sexual characteristics like breast development or voice deepening. This could have irreversible effects on growth and development.

Children may not have the maturity or cognitive ability to fully understand the long-term implications of medical treatments like cross-sex hormone therapy. Hormonal treatment has long-term effects on physical health, emotional well-being, and social interactions, and it is difficult for younger children to fully grasp these consequences.

The risks of early hormone therapy and the importance of informed consent contribute to the decision to delay such treatments until adulthood. For these reasons I ask for a favorable report on HB 1399.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lauren C. Arikan".

Delegate Lauren C. Arikan