

**Testimony Opposing HB1399: Health Occupations – Cross-Sex Hormone Therapy for Minors – Prohibition (Protect the Kids Act)**

**March 7, 2025**

The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk  
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee  
Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 241  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Re: Opposition to HB1399: Health Occupations – Cross-Sex Hormone Therapy for Minors – Prohibition (Protect the Kids Act)**

Dear Delegate Pena-Melnyk and Esteemed Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

My name is **Errol L. Fields, MD, PhD, MPH, FAAP**, and I am a board-certified pediatrician and adolescent medicine subspecialist residing in **District 22**. I am submitting this testimony to express my strong opposition to **HB1399: Health Occupations – Cross-Sex Hormone Therapy for Minors – Prohibition (Protect the Kids Act)**. As a medical professional who practices evidence-based medicine and is committed to the well-being of all youth, I believe this bill is harmful to transgender minors and undermines their access to medically necessary, life-saving care.

As a pediatrician, I am deeply concerned with the long-term effects of this bill on transgender youth, who already face disproportionate levels of discrimination and stigma. Professional medical organizations, such as the **American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)** and the **Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine (SAHM)**, have consistently supported gender-affirming care, including cross-sex hormone therapy, as an essential part of the healthcare for transgender youth. This support is grounded in scientific research and clinical evidence showing that gender-affirming care improves mental health, quality of life, and reduces suicidality among transgender minors.

However, beyond the evidence supporting the efficacy of gender-affirming care, there is a deeply concerning aspect of this bill that I feel is vital to address. As I describe in my article *"Achieving Health Equity for Sexual and Gender Diverse Youth"* (The Pediatric Clinics of North America, 2023), anti-LGBTQ policies and legislation, such as HB1399, contribute to a hostile and stressful environment for transgender youth. The environment of discrimination and stigma created by such policies has been shown to have a detrimental impact on the mental and physical health of transgender individuals, particularly youth. This hostile climate can exacerbate feelings of isolation, anxiety, depression, and increase the risk of self-harm and suicidality.

I have seen firsthand how this hostile environment has negatively impacted the health and well-being of my patients and their families. Transgender youth and their families often face not only societal discrimination but also the added burden of uncertainty regarding whether they will be

able to access necessary, affirming care. This uncertainty only compounds the stress they face, as they navigate a world that is increasingly unfriendly and unwelcoming to them.

Legislation like HB1399 only further stigmatizes these youth and denies them the essential care they need to live healthy and fulfilling lives. It sends a dangerous message that transgender youth and their families are not deserving of the same compassionate care that all children should receive. This bill will make it even more difficult for transgender minors to access medically appropriate treatment, leading to worsened mental health outcomes, exacerbating the disparities they already face, and undermining their ability to thrive.

I urge you to consider the real-world consequences of this bill. Transgender youth need support, not legislation that further isolates them and stigmatizes their identities. By opposing HB1399, we can ensure that transgender youth have access to the medical care they need to live healthy, happy lives in a supportive environment, free from the harmful effects of discrimination and political interference.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this critical issue. I ask that you stand with the medical community and reject HB1399 in the best interests of the youth of Maryland.

Sincerely,

**Errol L. Fields, MD, PhD, MPH, FAAP**

Pediatrician and Adolescent Medicine Subspecialist

District 22, Maryland