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Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair  
Delegate Bonnie Cullison, Vice Chair  
House Health and Government Operations Committee  
240 Taylor House Office Building  
241 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Committee:

RE: HB1399 - Health Occupations - Cross-Sex Hormone Therapy for Minors - Prohibition (Protect the Kids Act)

Letter of Information

The Maryland Psychological Association, (MPA), which represents over 1,000 doctoral-level psychologists throughout the state, is reaching out to provide additional information regarding HB1399.

The introduction of Gender Affirming Hormone Therapy (GAHT) prior to age 18 for transgender youth improves outcomes for youth. GAHT is a medically recognized and life-saving treatment that can be a crucial part of gender-affirming care. GAHT is not a decision made lightly; it is generally prescribed after careful evaluation by medical professionals, including endocrinologists, pediatricians, and mental health specialists, who assess the youth's readiness and understanding of the treatment process.

Additionally, when GAHT is introduced at younger ages, it provides a more natural transition process for the youth receiving the hormones. Initiating GAHT for youth can prevent the development of secondary sex characteristics that do not align with the youth's gender identity. By addressing gender dysphoria earlier, we can help reduce the potential for long-term emotional distress and improve the youth's overall quality of life. Furthermore, the medical team continues to follow the youth into adulthood to ensure continued medical and mental health care.

Numerous studies have shown that gender-affirming treatments, including GAHT, significantly improve the mental health of transgender minors. Access to these treatments can alleviate the distress caused by gender dysphoria, reducing the risk of depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. This is particularly important, as transgender youth are at a higher risk of mental health challenges due to societal discrimination and lack of support. Similarly, GAHT, when administered under the guidance of qualified medical professionals, is a safe and effective treatment. The standards of care for transgender minors, such as those outlined by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH), provide clear guidelines to ensure the responsible and ethical use of these treatments. It is also important to note that hormonal treatment for transgender youth is reversible to some extent if they choose to discontinue it in the future.

Prioritizing the health, well-being, and rights of all individuals, including transgender and gender-diverse youth is vital by ensuring that they have access to the necessary medical care.

To supplement this letter, we've also attached a [2023 letter written by the American Psychological Association](#), addressed to Congress that strongly advocates for the protection of gender affirming care for all people, including transgender youth.

Thank you for considering our comments on HB1399. If we can be of any further assistance as the Judiciary Committee considers this bill, please do not hesitate to contact MPA's Legislative Chair, Dr. Stephanie Wolf at [mpalegislativecommittee@gmail.com](mailto:mpalegislativecommittee@gmail.com).

Respectfully submitted,

David Goode-Cross, Ph.D.  
David Goode-Cross, Ph.D.  
President

Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.  
Stephanie Wolf, JD, Ph.D.  
Chair, MPA Legislative Committee

cc: Richard Bloch, Esq., Counsel for Maryland Psychological Association  
Barbara Brocato & Dan Shattuck, MPA Government Affairs