



2601 N HOWARD ST  
BALTIMORE, MD 21218  
TEL 410) 625-LGBT (5428)  
FAX 410) 625-7423  
www.freestate-justice.org

Health and Government Operations Committee  
240 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Friday, March 7, 2025

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

Position: **UNFAVORABLE**

Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison and Esteemed Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee:

My name is Ronnie L. Taylor, and I serve as the Advocacy, Policy, & Partnerships Director at FreeState Justice, a nonprofit organization dedicated to eliminating legal and systemic barriers faced by LGBTQIA+ individuals in Maryland. I am here to testify in strong opposition to **HB1399**, which seeks to prohibit licensed healthcare practitioners from providing cross-sex hormone therapy to minors for the treatment of mental health diagnoses associated with gender nonconformity, including gender dysphoria.

**HB1399** addresses the provision of cross-sex hormone therapy to minors diagnosed with gender dysphoria. The bill proposes to criminalize healthcare practitioners who administer such treatments, classifying violations as felonies punishable by imprisonment not exceeding life. This issue is significant to the LGBTQIA+ community and healthcare providers, as it directly impacts the accessibility of evidence-based, gender-affirming care for transgender and gender-diverse youth.

### **Explanation of Opposition:**

#### **1. Contradiction to Established Medical Guidelines**

Major medical organizations, including the Endocrine Society and the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH), recognize gender-affirming care, such as cross-sex hormone therapy, as effective and relatively safe when appropriately monitored. These treatments have been established as the standard of care for transgender and gender-diverse individuals.

### **LEADERSHIP TEAM**

Phillip Westry, Esq.

#### **Executive Director**

Lauren Pruitt, Esq.

#### **Legal Director**

Ronnie L. Taylor

#### **Advocacy, Policy, & Partnerships Director**

### **BOARD**

Lindsey Young  
**President**

Andrew Adelman, Esq.  
**Vice President**

Miller Douglas  
**Treasurer**

Lauren Fleming, Esq.  
**Secretary**

Adam Farra

Andrew Ansel

Bonnie Smith

Brenda Dorsch

Diana Philip

Lee Carpenter, Esq.

## 2. Negative Impact on Mental Health

Access to gender-affirming care is associated with improved mental health outcomes for transgender youth. Studies have shown that such care leads to a decrease in suicidal ideation and improved psychological functioning. Conversely, denying access to these treatments can exacerbate gender dysphoria, leading to increased rates of depression and suicide attempts.

## 3. Legal and Ethical Concerns

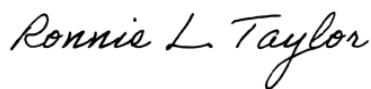
Criminalizing healthcare practitioners for providing standard medical care raises significant ethical and legal issues. It undermines the patient-provider relationship and may deter healthcare professionals from offering necessary care, even when it aligns with established medical guidelines. This could lead to a broader chilling effect on the provision of healthcare services to marginalized populations.

## 4. Disproportionate Impact on LGBTQIA+ Youth

Transgender and gender-diverse youth already face higher rates of mental health challenges, including suicidal behavior, often due to societal stigma and discrimination. Restricting access to gender-affirming care can further marginalize these individuals, exacerbating health disparities and undermining efforts toward social justice and equity.

In closing, I respectfully urge the committee to issue an unfavorable report for **HB1399**. This legislation not only contradicts established medical standards but also poses significant risks to the health and well-being of transgender and gender-diverse youth in Maryland. Upholding access to evidence-based, gender-affirming care is essential for promoting the health, dignity, and rights of all individuals.

Best,



Ronnie L. Taylor

### Sources:

1. [Impact of Ban on Gender-Affirming Care on Transgender Minors - Williams Institute](#)
2. [Gender Dysphoria/Gender Incongruence Guideline Resources | Endocrine Society](#)
3. [Mental Health Outcomes in Transgender and Nonbinary Youths Receiving Gender-Affirming Care | Pediatrics | JAMA Network Open | JAMA Network](#)