

The Honorable Chair
Delegate Heather Bagnall
Health Committee
240 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: OPPOSITION of House Bill 0679
Health Occupations - Cross-Sex Hormone Therapy for Minors**

To the Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and esteemed members of the Health Committee, My name is Blake Mihm, I am a resident of Dickerson, MD in Montgomery County. I am writing to name **my opposition to House Bill 0679 Health Occupations - Cross-Sex Hormone Therapy for Minors**). Every major medical association considers age-appropriate transition-related care medically-necessary, evidence has demonstrated that forgoing gender-affirming care can have tragic consequences.

Transgender individuals are up to three times more likely than the general population to report or be diagnosed with mental health disorders, with as many as 41.5 percent reporting at least one diagnosis of a mental health or substance use disorder. The increased prevalence of these mental health conditions is widely thought to be a consequence of minority stress, the chronic stress from coping with societal stigma, and discrimination because of one's gender identity and expression. Because of this stress, transgender minors also face a significantly heightened risk of suicide.

Conversely transgender individuals who receive transition-related care or hormone therapies where age-appropriate, lowers instances of mental health issues, increases self-esteem, and improves general quality of life.

I care about this bill because I care about the freedom of parents and doctors to decide what is best for children in their care. Peer-reviewed medical literature has shown that this type of care is appropriate and helpful for trans youth, and the government has no business preventing parents, doctors, and youth from deciding what type of medical care is appropriate. I work with and am related to trans youth, and it breaks my heart to know how much they already struggle to get medically necessary care.

For these reasons and many more, **I ask the Health Committee to give HB0679 an unfavorable report.**