

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 Anna Simons, I am a resident of Baltimore City. 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 have had many transgender friends from an early age, and watched how cruelty from their peers and non-acceptance from the adults in their lives dimmed their lights. I have been to the funerals of some of those friends, who died far too young as a result of substance abuse, violence, and other causes brought on from being "othered". I have also been blessed to witness young trans children grow up in a context where they are loved and supported unconditionally, and the difference is striking. Please don't take away our kids' chances to thrive.

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