

Testimony on: HB 679, Health Occupations - Cross-Sex Hormone Therapy for Minors
Hearing Date: February 18, 2026
POSITION: OPPOSE

My name is Harleigh Walker, I'm currently a freshman at the University of Maryland but originally from Alabama. I am here today to tell you all a success story with gender affirming care. Around eleven years old, I came out to my parents as transgender. No one suggested or forced me to "choose" this. Being transgender is not a choice. It is simply who I am.

I want to clear up misinformation spread about the care that trans youth receive. Proponents of this legislation claim these doctors pressure or rush you, and immediately start filling you full of hormones, puberty blockers and perform surgeries- and that is simply not the case. When I first met with gender affirming care specialists, they spent time getting to know me, understanding my specific case, figuring out how to best care for me, as a patient.

HB679 is being flaunted as "protecting kids", but it's doing the exact opposite. I went through my teenage years in fear of losing access to gender affirming health care, severely damaging my mental health and wellbeing. This treatment has been life-saving, as it enabled me to express myself in my fullest capacity and not be trapped in a permanent prison of hate and self loathing that comes with being born in the wrong body. I would not be here in front of you all today or frankly even be alive if I hadn't received that care in my teenage years.

Trans people are often painted as miserable and "mentally ill" but that couldn't be further from the truth, I am a VERY happy 18-year-old woman. I am able to live my life able to express myself authentically every single day. I have been able to become pretty successful, even at a young age, speaking in front of the United States Senate and House, maintaining a 4.00 GPA and extracurricular commitments, and living my life as a young adult to the fullest.

None of that would've been possible without being afforded gender affirming care as a teenager. This care saved my life and provided me with the confidence to go out into the world and be successful. It is your responsibility as legislators to ensure the pursuit of happiness and success for ALL of your constituents; including transgender youth. Let these kids be just like me and be able to live their life to the fullest. I strongly urge you to OPPOSE HB679, the lives and wellbeing of thousands of kids are counting on it.

Thank you for your time,

Harleigh Walker