

Monday, February 16, 2026

Dear Members of the House Health Committee,

I am a resident of Baltimore City and District 41. I am also a clinical psychologist working with trans youth and a practitioner of evidence-based therapeutic practices supporting members of the LGBTQ+ community. I am testifying in **strong opposition to HB679 - Health Occupations - Cross-Sex Hormone Therapy for Minors.**

HB679 attempts to ban hormone replacement therapy for minors. **This bill dangerously sets a precedent for interfering with private citizens' medical care and curtails medical professionals' decision-making abilities** and ability to prioritize the medical best interests of their patients in consultation with modern medical science. As a Marylander and as a mental health practitioner, I strongly oppose any legal intrusions into the critical and personally tailored relationship between patients and their medical providers.

Furthermore, **the peer-reviewed scientific consensus has indicated for decades that gender-affirming care is hugely impactful in improving mental health outcomes for trans people, including decreasing rates of suicidality and deaths by suicide¹.** Blocking access to life-saving gender-affirming intervention for trans youth will literally have a death toll for Marylanders in the form of sustained risk for suicidality due to lack of access to gender-affirming care. On this basis alone, HB679 must be blocked.

Amongst many other baseless and dangerous claims, politically motivated anti-trans activists often exaggerate regret rates for gender affirming care. In actuality, **gender-affirming care has exceedingly low regret rates²**, with very small proportions of people who receive gender-affirming care taking steps to reverse that care³. Any risks proponents of HB679 claim to be protecting people from are clearly exaggerated with the aim of oppressing vulnerable communities and harming their quality of life.

Finally, **I strongly oppose HB679 on the basis of what this bill would communicate to trans Marylanders: that Maryland is not a state where trans people are welcome,**

¹ Suicide-Related Outcomes Following Gender-Affirming Treatment: A Review. Daniel Jackson (2023)

² Regret after Gender-affirmation Surgery: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis of Prevalence
Valeria P Bustos, Samyd S Bustos, Andres Mascaro, Gabriel Del Corral, Antonio J Forte, Pedro Ciudad, Esther A Kim, Howard N Langstein, Oscar J Manrique (2021).

³ Reidentification With Birth-Registered Sex in a Western Australian Pediatric Gender Clinic Cohort
Blake S. Cavve, PhD, Xander Bickendorf, Jack Ball, PhD, et al (2023).

supported, and treated as citizens with equal rights to every other Marylander. It is categorically unethical, harmful, and bigoted to limit and erode the medical care available to a small and vulnerable minority of people simply on the basis of their gender identity. I am proud of our state's standing as a comparable safe haven for trans people compared to many other states in the US, and in the strongest possible terms I believe it is imperative that we continue to protect trans people's rights in the state of Maryland.

Again, in the strongest possible terms, I wholeheartedly **oppose HB679 - Health Occupations - Cross-Sex Hormone Therapy for Minors.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Dr. Katherine Blaha
Baltimore, MD 21209