

OPPOSITION to House Bill 679
Health Occupations – Cross-Sex Hormone Therapy for Minors– Prohibition

My name is Theresa Kraemer and I reside in Baltimore County. I strongly OPPOSE HB 679 which would prohibit licensed health care practitioners from prescribing, dispensing, or administering cross-sex hormones or otherwise providing cross-sex hormone therapy for the treatment of a mental health diagnoses associated with gender nonconformity, including gender dysphoria, to an individual who is a minor. I am a parent of a child who identifies as non-binary in gender, and I find it incredulous and insulting that a bill is being discussed that would prohibit our health care practitioner from using their full professional experience and information when working with my family.

I firmly believe that healthcare decisions should remain within the healthcare provider-patient relationship. I hope we can all agree that parents love their children most and are uniquely qualified to make decisions for their children in everything from daily meals to schools to healthcare. Nobody but parents can understand and advocate for their children, including when a child has a special need of any kind. I personally have experienced the unexpected parenting of a child who questioned their gender identity from toddlerhood. We actively parented our child to help them experience gender-normative interests. We consistently taught them that gender was not as important as becoming a kind, loving person. And, when our very young child persisted into adolescence with their own inner identity different from what we expected, we realized that we needed to also listen and respect them. We loved our child and knew that we needed to guide and support them into becoming a healthy, kind, productive member of society. We realized that gender was secondary to this goal. Throughout the years, we talked to a wide variety of professionals, read lots of books, researched about the LGBTQIA+ community, met with other families within the LGBTQIA+ community, and prayed a lot. Eventually, we sought professional health care and our practitioner gave us a lot of information and explained the challenges, choices, risks, and benefits of a wide variety of treatment options. This made all the difference to my child's life and the lives of our whole family. The care that my child receives encompasses medical treatments, precautionary checks, monitoring procedures, and psychological support. I do not believe that government should restrict treatments available to the healthcare/family team.

Professional health care practitioners and parents are the only ones uniquely qualified to make health care decisions for minors, so I strongly OPPOSE HB-679.

-Theresa Kraemer, Baltimore County