

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 Lukah Love, and I am a resident of Baltimore City, in Maryland's 45th Legislative District. 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.

A person's gender identity is central to how we understand ourselves, and learning who we are does not - and should not - wait until we are 18 years old. Being provided the resources and support to learn - and pursue - who we are is crucial to our mental and physical health. Not just because it allows us to be comfortable in our own skin, but also because it allows us to feel safe and comfortable with the adults who support us, and in turn rely on those adults for all kinds of care.

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

For more information about this position, feel free to contact me at lukahlove@gmail.com. Thank you for your care and attention to defeating this dehumanizing bill.

Sincerely,

Lukah Love

Baltimore City
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