

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 Pauley, 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.

As a trans adult, I experience discrimination and stress regularly coping with societal stigma. As a cisgender teenager, I used substances to disconnect myself from reality. These experiences reinforce my belief that trans youth should have access to gender-affirming care. It is essential mental health care that enables gender-diverse young people to live fuller, healthier, and more authentic lives.

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

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