

To: Maryland House Health Committee Members
Subject: Testimony in support of HB1380

Good afternoon, Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, members of the House Health Committee,

My name is Tina Jones, I am transgender, and I support HB1380.

I'm sure many of you have already reviewed the research literature that overwhelmingly supports the use of Hormone Replacement Therapy in transgender and nonbinary people. The Trevor Project, New England Journal of Medicine, Stanford University School of Medicine and our own Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine are among the hundreds of scientific organizations which have validated that HRT improves the quality of life for transgender and nonbinary people by reducing depression, anxiety, and suicide. These medications are truly life-changing and lifesaving.

But that's not why I'm here. I'm here to share my personal experience with HRT and why it's important these vital medications remain consistently available in the future. I can personally attest to the benefits identified through research. I experience less depression and anxiety. I no longer have suicidal ideations – something that is very important to me as a person who survived a suicide attempt prior to starting HRT. Because of the availability of HRT medications, I have a better quality of life. Or as my wife says, I am a happier, better version of myself.

I have also experienced difficulties in ensuring a consistent supply of HRT on the Eastern Shore where I live. In the last 3 years, I have changed HRT prescribers 4 times. Not because I wanted to, but because the providers left the region or stopped providing HRT services. Today, there are fewer providers, not more, on the shore. It takes longer to find a new provider and when you do, it takes longer to get an appointment. Each time this happens, I question whether I will run out of medicine prior to getting my next refill. I don't want to face the possibility of having to purchase black market HRT, something I have done, to survive. Supporting HB1380 will go a long way in assuring that I do not face the risk of running out of my necessary medication. It will help guarantee that I have a better quality of life, that I remain the happier, better version of myself for my wife, my family, my community and for me.

Please support HB1380 so that my life, and the lives of other people like me, are not put at risk.

Respectfully,

Tina Grace Jones, she/her