

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 Gretchen Tome, and I am a resident of Baltimore City in District 45. 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 licensed, clinical Social Worker who works with youth in our public school system, I know that it is vital to ensure that our communities fully support all youth. [Suicide risk among transgender youth is 4x the national average](#), however, when transgender youth are supported by their communities, that risk is greatly decreased. Legislation such as HB679 puts lives at risk by codifying barriers and discrimination.

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

Sincerely,

Gretchen M. Tome  
District 45