

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 Matthew Smith, I am a resident of Baltimore City, 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.

I sing with an LGBTQ+ community chorus in Baltimore City, and have had the opportunity to get to know several trans individuals who are young adults, and hear their stories which often include access to gender appropriate care. Myself, I'm in my 50s; and the stories of trans friends and acquaintances coming up in the 1980s and '90s were starkly different, often tragic. I want our young people to be happy, and healthy, and getting the medically-necessary care they need. Why would we restrict health professionals from providing it? This bill is blatantly transphobic, and it puts trans kids at risk.

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

For more information please reach out to Charlotte Hoffman (they/she) • Trans Maryland • 317-446-4326 •
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