

The Honorable Chair Heather Bagnall
Chairman, Health Government and Operations Committee
Room 240 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SUPPORT of House Bill 679 (Health Occupations - Cross-Sex Hormone Therapy for Minors) - UNFAVORABLE

Dear Chair Bagnall and members of the Health Committee,

My name is Cola and I am a community organizer and a leader of the BRIDGES Coalition for Overdose Prevention Centers (OPC). I am also a trans woman who has been on hormone replacement therapy (HRT) for over ten years, and it has completely saved and changed my life. Access to this kind of care as a minor would have changed my life for the better then and now.

I was finally able to access gender-affirming care in my 20s. I was told by doctors that it was too late to prevent some of the irreversible effects of puberty on my anatomy. This time, prior to HRT, was the most uncomfortable, gender dysphoric, and suicidal period of my life. Before I had access to HRT, I was deeply oppressed and depressed. I grew up facing relentless teasing, bullying, and assault, which ultimately led to me dropping out of high school. I was never seen as myself and missed out on normal experiences like dating.

I wish I had been able to take hormones earlier on in my life. In this trans-violent society, passing equates to safety. Giving minors access to HRT could help them live a safer, happier, and more liberated life later on as an adult. Protecting access to gender-affirming treatment is a community harm reduction strategy, supported by public health research. Without access to these essential services, our state risks pushing vulnerable trans and gender diverse Marylanders further into the margins, exposing them to unemployment, housing discrimination, harassment, and interpersonal violence.

This is an emergency, and we urge you to act now. **I ask that the Health Committee give HB679 an unfavorable report.**

For more information please contact Cola Anderson at Colaayanderson@gmail.com