



## Support: House Bill 679

### Health Occupations – Cross–Sex Hormone Therapy for Minors

House Bill 679 establishes an important and reasonable safeguard for minors in Maryland by prohibiting licensed health care practitioners from prescribing, dispensing, or administering cross-sex hormones or providing cross-sex hormone therapy to a minor for the purpose of treating a mental health diagnosis associated with gender nonconformity, including gender dysphoria.

The bill defines “cross-sex hormone” to include prescription hormones such as estrogen and testosterone, as well as hormone blockers. It defines “cross-sex hormone therapy” as treatment used to develop secondary sex characteristics for an individual transitioning from their assigned sex at birth to their experienced or expressed gender.

This legislation is grounded in a simple principle: minors are not equipped to make irreversible, life-altering medical decisions with permanent physical consequences.

Cross-sex hormone interventions can result in significant and lasting effects on fertility, bone density, cardiovascular health, and long-term development. These treatments are powerful medical interventions, not routine counseling services. When used on minors for mental health diagnoses, they raise profound ethical and medical concerns.

Maryland law currently allows minors age 16 and older to consent to treatment for a mental or emotional disorder. However, cross-sex hormone therapy goes far beyond traditional mental health treatment. It involves altering a young person’s physical development in ways that may not be reversible. The state has a compelling interest in ensuring that children are protected from medical decisions that carry permanent consequences.

This bill does not prohibit counseling, mental health support, or compassionate care for minors experiencing distress. It draws a careful boundary at irreversible hormonal interventions while young people are still developing physically and emotionally.

Across the country and internationally, policymakers and medical authorities are reassessing the use of cross-sex hormones for minors in light of emerging evidence and ongoing debate within the medical community. Maryland should take a cautious approach when it comes to permanent medical interventions on children.

For these reasons, the State Freedom Caucus Network respectfully urges a favorable report on House Bill 679.