



COUNCILMEMBER LAURIE-ANNE SAYLES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

AT LARGE

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

February 21, 2024

TO: Delegate Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Laurie-Anne Sayles
Montgomery County Councilmember At-Large

RE: HB691, Legally Protected Health Care - Gender-Affirming Treatment

I am writing today to support [HB691](#), *Legally Protected Health Care - Gender-Affirming Treatment*. This legislation would protect both patients and healthcare providers in Maryland from other jurisdictions attempting to obtain sensitive medical information, specifically individuals who undergo gender-affirming treatment. Unfortunately, we are already seeing attempts by Texas to subpoena the records of individuals experiencing gender-affirming care in a Seattle hospital. While the merits of that attempt are currently underway in court, Maryland should use this as a chance to update its definition of “legally protected health care” to ensure that those receiving gender-affirming care are not outed for political purposes.

It is abhorrent that Texas and other states have taken an adversarial position against members of the LGBTQ+ community. With an increasing number of state laws passing across the United States that unjustly target the LGBTQ+ community, it is time for Maryland to step up and emphasize that we welcome and will protect the LGBTQ+ community. Maryland must communicate that we will oppose efforts to impose discriminatory laws on our state.

Without the protection from this law, many businesses and health care providers may be forced to or pressured into divulging information that has the potential to cause significant harm. We must do more to protect a community that statistically has much higher rates of suicide than their straight counterparts. By passing this piece of legislation, Maryland has the chance to show the LGBTQ+ community that we see them, we hear them, and we will protect them.

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