

The Honorable Anne Kaiser, Chair
And Members of the Ways & Means Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
Annapolis, MD

RE: HB 377 – Commission on Student Behavioral & Mental Health – OPPOSED

Dear Chairman Kaiser and Committee Members,

HB 377 has far reaching implications for students and their parents. Over and over again we see the approval or consultation of parents and guardians removed or left out of legislation and regulations that grant children decision-making authority for which they are not ready to make responsibly. Sometimes parents are consulted only if the school deems them “accepting” or “supportive” of whatever the school is allowing the student to do. Otherwise, it is considered “unsafe” to advise the parents.

When viewed together with HB 132 – to lower the age of informed consent from 16 years to 12 years of age for consultation, diagnosis and treatment for mental & emotional health issues, and HB 1300 (2020) Kirwan Blueprint for the Future that calls for School-based Health Centers funded at \$6,500,000 per year plus maximized **external private funding** for behavioral health services, it raises serious questions as to what is being planned to be carried out in behavioral and mental health therapies, and whose external funding will be used and for what purposes?

HB 377 tasks the Commission to study & recommend actions needed on behavioral health treatment & practices for students dealing with behavioral health & mental health issues, including scope of practice, age of consent for services, types of service, & duration of treatment; to revise guidelines for student behavioral health treatment & practices in school-based health centers; and research ways to coordinate school-based practices with health care provider practices to improve treatment for students who need behavioral/mental health treatment.

If I understand correctly the Affordable Care Act, requires health insurers, if they cover hormones for non-transgender, such as birth control, or breast-reduction surgery, they must also cover hormones and surgeries, such as breast removal, for transgender-identified. If the age of consent is 12, a 12-year-old could consent to taking Testosterone without a parent’s knowledge or consent. I recommend you read “Irreversible Damage” by Abigail Shrier that studies in depth the issue of young girls’ self-diagnosis of trans being “affirmed” by the doctor and treatment prescribed that is irreversible.

No young person, under 21 should receive drugs or surgery to change their sex or gender. There is plenty of time for them to make those decisions as an adult.

I urge you to give HB 377 an Unfavorable Report.

Sincerely,
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