



## **TESTIMONY TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

### **SB460 - Trans Health Equity Act**

**Position-** Support

**By:** Nancy Soreng, President LWVMD

**Date:** February 28, 2023

My name is Ericka McDonald. I'm testifying on behalf of the League of Women Voters, representing concerned citizens in districts throughout Maryland, in support of the Trans Health Equity Act. I'm also a parent of a transgender child who has benefited from gender-affirming care.

The League is a nonpartisan organization that works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. At the 2020 LWVUS Convention, delegates voted to amend the LWVUS bylaws to include the League's commitment to its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Policy in Article II as one of the foundational policies of the organization alongside the Political Policy (also referred to as the Nonpartisan Policy).<sup>1</sup>

The League advocates for the health and safety of transgender Americans. The League's Health Care Policy states that affordable access to a basic level of quality care should be provided *for all U.S. residents*.<sup>2</sup> The League fights for equal rights for every person and is dedicated to creating a more inclusive and fair society.<sup>3</sup>

For those of you who are not familiar with transgender people, please understand that gender affirming care is treatment for a medical condition called gender dysphoria. Treatment for gender dysphoria is based on medical standards. It is endorsed by leading medical associations, including the American Medical Association.<sup>45</sup>

There are many misconceptions about gender dysphoria. The International Classification of Diseases specifies that it is a medical condition, not a mental disorder.<sup>6</sup> Treatment is not elective, cosmetic care. Detransitioning is extremely rare. Receipt of gender affirming care is proven to dramatically reduce rates of suicide attempts,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/bylaws/lwvus-bylaws-and-certificate-incorporation>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/LWV-impact-2020.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.lwv.org/blog/major-lgbtq-rights-cases-happening-now>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ama-assn.org/health-care-advocacy/advocacy-update/march-26-2021-state-advocacy-update>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ama-assn.org/press-center/press-releases/ama-reinforces-opposition-restrictions-transgender-medical-care>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.who.int/standards/classifications/frequently-asked-questions/gender-incongruence-and-transgender-health-in-the-icd>



decreased rates of depression and anxiety, decreased substance use, and may other positive effects.<sup>7</sup>

Access to gender affirming medication and surgery - which my private insurance pays for - saved my child's life. Before receiving gender affirming care, my son suffered from suicide ideation, depression, and crippling anxiety. With care these problems are significantly reduced. He is healing; able to maintain friendships and pursue his education.

The League's mission is to empower voters and defend democracy, which depends on equitable treatment and protections under law for all Americans.<sup>8</sup> Marylanders who rely on Medicaid do not have the same access to necessary healthcare as those who have private insurance. And Black transgender Marylanders - who are disproportionately impacted by violence and homelessness - especially need this life saving care.<sup>9</sup>

I urge you, on behalf of my family and the League of Women Voters, Maryland, to return a favorable report.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Full-Report-Dec17.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.lww.org/league-urges-us-senate-pass-equality-act>

<sup>9</sup> <https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Full-Report-Dec17.pdf>