



TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE ECONOMICS COMMITTEE

HB 1283-Insurance-Discrimination-Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

POSITION: Support

BY: Linda T. Kohn, President

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The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization that works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. The League believes that no one should be denied health care services due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. The League further believes that no insurer should deny coverage or mandate additional conditions for coverage based on a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.

Unfortunately, discrimination based on a person's sexual orientation and gender identity is rampant. For example, even though every major medical association including the American Medical Association, the American Psychiatric Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics recognize that gender affirming care is medically necessary, 22 states have banned gender affirming care. These bans have no rational basis but exist solely to deprive a person from obtaining treatment to help them conform to the gender with which they identify. Private companies also engage in such discrimination.

Under current law an insurer, insurance producer, surety insurer or health network may not discriminate against a person based "wholly or partly race, color, creed, color, sex, religion, national origin, place of residency blindness or other physical handicap or disability." House Bill 1283 would simply add sexual orientation and gender identity to these protected classes.

No one should be denied health care services or other types of insurance due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. House Bill 1283 forbids such discrimination.

For these reasons the League of Women Voters Maryland, which represents more than 1,500 concerned citizens throughout Maryland, strongly urges a favorable report on House Bill 1283.