



Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs

Statement on the National Defense Authorization Act

Approved on 1.13.2025

On December 11, 2024, the United States House of Representatives voted on H.R. 5009, the Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025, passing the legislation 281-140. In the United States Senate, the bill passed by a vote of 85-14 on December 18, 2024 and was signed into law by President Biden on December 23, 2024. This marked the first time in nearly 30 years since an anti-LGBTQIA+ policy was enshrined into Federal law.

The legislation contained language prohibiting the coverage of gender affirming care, including puberty blockers and hormone therapy, for minors of military families under TRICARE insurance. Effectively, the United States Congress has declared their distrust of America's service members to make decisions regarding medical care for their children. Once such restrictions are added to the law, they can be incredibly difficult to remove, as seen with the Hyde Amendment, which remains in federal appropriations bills nearly half a century after its first enactment in 1976.

The Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs is shocked and dismayed that the majority of Maryland's Congressional Delegation voted in support of H.R. 5009. Congressman Steny Hoyer (D-MD 5), Congressman Glenn Ivey (D-MD 4), Congressman Kweisi Mfume (D-MD 7), Congressman Dutch Ruppersberger (D-MD 2), Congressman Andy Harris (R-MD 1) and Congressman David Trone (D-MD 6), as well as Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), voted in favor of the bill.

Funding support for the military while stripping rights from servicemembers, veterans, and their families is antithetical to the mission for which these brave people risk their lives. This historic move "mark[s] one of the first times Congress passed a Federal statute directed at trans people," according to NBC News. Without question, it is the wrong side of history.

The Commission expresses gratitude to Congressman Jamie Raskin (D-MD 8) and Congressman John Sarbanes (D-MD 3) for voting against H.R. 5009, recognizing the freedom all Americans have to make their own medical decisions.

The Commission extends an invitation to all returning Federal delegation members, as well as new Federal delegation members, Senator Angela Alsobrooks (D-MD), Congressman Johnny Olszewski (D-MD 2), Congresswoman Sarah Elfreth (D-MD 3), and Congresswoman April McClain-Delaney (D-MD 6) to discuss issues facing Maryland's LGBTQIA+ communities.

The Commission remains unwavering in its dedication to protecting the rights and freedoms of LGBTQIA+ and transgender people. We firmly oppose any efforts to use our communities as political tools, and urge our elected leaders to uphold dignity, respect, and equity for all Marylanders, particularly those who serve our nation with honor.

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The Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs, created by the Maryland General Assembly, works to serve LGBTQIA+ Marylanders by galvanizing community voices, researching and addressing challenges, and advocating for policies that advance equity and inclusion. The Commission envisions a Maryland where all LGBTQIA+ people can live full and authentic lives. As a vital resource, the Commission collaborates with public officials, agencies, and community partners to ensure the rights and dignity of LGBTQIA+ Marylanders are protected and respected. Learn more at <https://goci.maryland.gov/lgbtq/> and connect with us at LGBTQIA@maryland.gov.