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H.659

Introduced by Representatives Vyhovsky of Essex, Small of Winooski,
Burrows of West Windsor, Cina of Burlington, Colburn of
Burlington, Cordes of Lincoln, Donnally of Hyde Park,
Mulvaney-Stanak of Burlington, Rachelson of Burlington, and
Surprenant of Barnard

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Health; minors; consent; gender-affirming care

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to allow a minor
who identifies as transgender to consent to receiving hormone blockers and
other nonsurgical, gender-affirming care and treatment without requiring
parental consent.

An act relating to allowing minors to consent to nonsurgical, gender-
affirming care

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. FINDINGS

The General Assembly finds that:

(1) According to a 2021 national survey by the Trevor Project,
42 percent of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning

1 (LGBTQ) youth recently seriously considered attempting suicide, including
2 more than half of transgender and nonbinary youth.

3 (2) The Trevor Project has found that affirming transgender and
4 nonbinary youth by respecting their pronouns and allowing them to change
5 legal documents to conform to their gender identity is associated with lower
6 rates of attempted suicide among these populations.

7 (3) In the 2019 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey (VYRBS),
8 14 percent of Vermont high school students reported identifying as LGBTQ in
9 2019, including two percent of students who identified as transgender and
10 another one percent who reported being unsure about whether they were
11 transgender.

12 (4) Per the 2019 VYRBS, LGBTQ high school students were
13 significantly more likely than their heterosexual and cisgender peers to report
14 being subject to instances of actual or threatened physical violence, bullying,
15 and sexual and dating violence. They were also more likely to have recently or
16 frequently used tobacco, alcohol, or cannabis and to have driven while under
17 the influence of alcohol or cannabis within the past 30 days or to have ridden
18 in a motor vehicle with an impaired driver.

19 (5) According to the 2019 VYRBS, 63 percent of LGBTQ high school
20 students reported feeling sad or hopeless within the past year, compared with
21 25 percent of heterosexual and cisgender students. Thirty-six percent of

1 LGBTQ students said they had made a plan for how they would attempt
2 suicide, compared with nine percent of their heterosexual and cisgender peers,
3 and 19 percent of LGBTQ students reported that they had attempted suicide
4 during the past year, compared with four percent of their heterosexual and
5 cisgender peers.

6 (6) Numerous studies have shown that transgender youth, especially
7 those whose families reject their transgender identity or refuse to consent to
8 providing them gender-affirming care and treatment, are at elevated risk for
9 anxiety, depression, and suicidality.

10 (7) The results of a 2020 study indicated that transgender youth who
11 took hormone blockers to delay puberty had a reduced likelihood of suicidal
12 ideation and severe psychological distress as adults than those wanted to take
13 blockers but did not receive them.

14 Sec. 2. 18 V.S.A. chapter 233 is added to read:

15 CHAPTER 233. ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE SERVICES

16 § 9801. MINORS' ACCESS TO NONSURGICAL, GENDER-AFFIRMING
17 CARE

18 A minor who identifies as transgender may give consent to receive hormone
19 blockers and any other legally authorized nonsurgical, gender-affirming care or
20 treatment from a licensed health care professional working within the health
21 care professional's authorized scope of practice. Consent under this section

1 shall not be subject to disaffirmance due to minority of the individual
2 providing consent. The consent of the individual's parent or guardian shall not
3 be necessary to authorize the minor's access to legally authorized nonsurgical,
4 gender-affirming care or treatment.

5 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

6 This act shall take effect on passage.