

**Testimony Before the Maryland General Assembly  
Health and Government Operations Committee**

**Testimony of Ismail Royer  
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**February 21, 2024**

Thank you, Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ismail Royer and I represent the Religious Freedom Institute, a multi-faith non-profit based in Washington, DC. I direct the Islam section, where I serve as a Muslim voice for religious freedom for everyone.

I want to express my unqualified endorsement of the principles in which HB 722 is grounded from a Muslim perspective. Among those principles are:

- 1. That it is the duty of the physician to heal and not harm the patient; and**
- 2. That physicians harm children when they perform medical intervention by destroying their healthy tissue or disrupting their natural process of sexual maturity.**

As to the first principle:

The Prophet Muhammad said: “Let there be no harm, nor returning of harm.”<sup>1</sup> This is the most fundamental legal and ethical principle of Islam.

In this vein the 9<sup>th</sup> century Arab physician Ishaq al-Ruhawi wrote in a commentary on Hippocrates, the father of medicine:

“And two things are incumbent upon you: the first is to benefit the patient, and the second is not to harm him.”<sup>2</sup>

So, this is a Muslim scholar writing 1200 years ago, endorsing a principle articulated in Ancient Greece nearly 2500 years ago.

As to the second premise on which HB 722 is grounded: that medical sex transition intervention is harmful.

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Sunan al-Kubrā lil-Bayhaqī No. 11384.

<sup>2</sup> Levey, Martin & Ruhawi, Ishaq ibn Ali (1967). *Medical Ethics of Medieval Islam with Special Reference to Al-Ruhāwī 'Practical Ethics of the Physician.'* American Philosophical Society, p. 56.

I submit that the sex one is born with is not a disease requiring treatment. So when physicians remove healthy breasts or a healthy uterus, when they prescribe drugs that interrupt the natural process of sexual maturity, they do not heal patients, they harm them.

Some might object that children have the right to autonomy in seeking such procedures. In this connection, Ar-Ruhawi said:

“It is essential that the physician not follow the will of the patient unless it benefits him in getting better; he should not obey him in this with respect to his individual rights.”<sup>3</sup>

And this would apply with even more force to children, whose capacity for determining their best interest is not yet fully formed.

In conclusion, people of any faith or no faith can clearly see the reasonableness of this bill. Physicians must do no harm. Medical procedures with the aim of changing the sex of a child harms the child. Hence, physicians must not perform such interventions.

I urge a favorable report on House Bill 772.

Thank you.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.