

CATHOLIC CONFERENCE OF OHIO

May 19, 2022

Written Proponent Testimony HB 454 House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee

Chair Manchester, Vice-Chair Cutrona, Ranking Member Denson, and members of the House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. My name is Brian Hickey, and I am an Associate Director at the Catholic Conference of Ohio. The Conference is the official representative of the Catholic Church in Ohio in matters of public policy. We support House Bill 454, known as the SAFE Act.

The Catholic Conference recognizes the psychological condition of “gender dysphoria” and the significant distress, pain, and complications it can cause a person. We believe that a person suffering from this condition deserves compassion, charity, and personal accompaniment. Additionally, we reject any denigration of an individual suffering from gender dysphoria as contrary to the Gospel. Personal accompaniment or therapy must address gender dysphoria without contradicting one’s immutable biological sex, especially through a medical or related procedure for the purpose of transitioning to a different gender.

We believe it is particularly prudent to prohibit in law any gender transition procedure as defined in HB 454 for minors under eighteen years of age. If such procedures are allowed for minors, it can cause effects that the minor cannot rectify later in life. Further, studies cited in this bill show that the vast majority of children experiencing gender dysphoria later identify with their biological sex in adolescence or adulthood, which can often mean more pain for the individual. It is exceptionally painful to hear the stories of individuals who underwent one of these procedures as a minor only to discover its damage and his or her regret later in life.

HB 454 recognizes that Ohio law should treat minors, as it does in other contexts, differently than adults in prohibiting transition procedures. We urge your passage of this legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.