



House Bill 454
Opponent Testimony
Ohio House of Representatives, Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee

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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 testify today.

My name is Patricia Manning-Courtney, and I am a Board Certified Pediatrician and Chief of Staff at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. I have been in clinical practice for over 25 years, and as Chief of Staff I oversee all of the clinical medical operations and medical staff at Cincinnati Children's.

HB 454 seeks to restrict evidence-based care for young people with gender dysphoria, and insert legislators into the relationship between a minor patient, their parents and their medical provider in an unprecedented manner.

Some have pointed to the growing numbers of children identifying with gender issues as evidence that this is a "trend" or attention seeking. I agree that any growing population warrants consideration and a better understanding, as we've tried to understand numerous other growing populations- whether they be children with allergies or asthma, or obesity, or autism. Yet we don't attribute these growing populations to trendiness, or attention seeking, and we certainly don't restrict or legislate care to these populations. Other have used the relatively small population of children seeking care for gender issues, and specifically medical care, as justification for restricting or legislating care, given the impact would be small. Would we restrict care from other small populations of children? Our OH Children's Hospitals provide care to many small populations of patients and as a Pediatrician, I can't imagine what number of patients, of children, is too small to be considered for care, to not matter.

Concerns have been raised about the safety and reversibility of hormone treatment- treatment that is prescribed only after mandatory mental health counseling, parental consent, and watchful waiting. We are so fortunate in this state to have experts in the field of endocrinology who guide our practices, which are safe, and reversible in the case of puberty blockers, and partly reversible in the case of sex hormones.

I had the opportunity in my practice, over 15 years ago, to meet a family with a 13 year old son. Their primary concern was that their son identified as a girl. He actually specifically said he wanted to be a girl- that was the only way he knew how to say what he was feeling. I remember the conviction with which he shared that with me, the fear and confusion in his parents' faces, and the helplessness I felt as

a physician to guide them. There were no clinics to address the questions this family had, to provide guidance, support, and answers. To help them feel less alone and scared.

As the Physician overseeing clinical operations at CCHMC, I can assure you we take very seriously our role in providing safe and evidence-based care to all seeking our help. Allegations of experimentation, and abuse, and grooming are deeply offensive. Our TG clinics provide invaluable medical, social, psychological, and spiritual care and support to families who are frightened, confused, alone. This is the same type of multidisciplinary care we provide to many complex patient populations- fetal care, cystic fibrosis, epilepsy, headaches, colorectal abnormalities. Restricting this care would cause more harm than I can imagine. I urge you to vote no on this bill.