

Scott Schwartz, DDS, MPH
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Susan Manchester, Chair
Ohio House Families, Aging and Human Services Committee
Ohio House of Representatives
77 South High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chairwoman Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona and Ranking Member Denson,

My name is Scott Schwartz, DDS, MPH and I am a practicing pediatric dentist. I have over 10 years' experience in caring for patients and am currently licensed to practice in Ohio. I have personally worked with the transgender and gender dysphoric population, having published several studies about the overlapping oral health needs of this population and speak nationally on the topic. Please do not allow Ohio to be on the wrong side of history like so many states.

The Ohio General Assembly should leave the practice of medicine to licensed healthcare providers. I am gravely concerned that HB454 sets a dangerous precedent by interfering with medical decision making and parent/caregiver autonomy to discuss care options in consultation with their child's medical provider.

As I practice dentistry, I perform a thorough evaluation on each patient and make treatment recommendations based on the best available evidence for that individual's situation. In my experience, parents/caregivers do the best they can, often in difficult circumstances, to make decisions they believe are in their child's best interest. An example of this is the decision to put a child to sleep to receive dental care under general anesthesia, sometimes including children who are medically fragile.

HB454 would place medical professionals in an ethical dilemma: we would have to refrain from providing evidence-based care to patients struggling with a diagnosis of gender dysphoria or lose our medical license. **I cannot imagine another diagnosis where a state law would prohibit us from delivering evidence-based care.**

In a time when the demand for child and adolescent mental health care is at its highest, HB454 makes the demand even higher. I address patients' mental health every day. My sister, an adolescent psych nurse here at Cincinnati Children's tells me of the patients she sees daily who are in grave danger from mental health issues and the stories derived from the patients she and I treat daily are heartbreaking. I was trained to treat the whole child; ignoring a child's mental health or a diagnosis like gender dysphoria is simply not responsible care.

I implore you to vote no on HB454. This bill sets a dangerous precedent.

Sincerely,

Scott Schwartz, DDS, MPH