

Dana Zucker
6530 Tulip Court
Liberty Township, OH 45044

June 1, 2022

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,

I am writing to you to voice my opposition to House Bill 454. This bill will irreparably harm children and adolescents in Ohio and will lead to an increase in depression, anxiety, and suicide among transgender youths in the state.

Gender-affirming care is healthcare. The decision to provide such care is one to be made by a patient, their parents, and their doctor. The state has no legitimate reason to interfere and prevent evidence-based treatment from being delivered. Gender-affirming care is not given lightly or carelessly but only after great consideration and methodical evaluation.

The entire bill is concerning, but Sec 3129.05 is especially disturbing to me. Should this bill pass, a child or teen speaking about their gender to a trusted adult in school would be reported to their parents. This bill does not take into consideration the child's homelife and their continued safety if their parents are transphobic. Transgender youth experience higher rates of homelessness than their cisgender peers. They are at increased risk for physical, verbal, and emotional abuse. Removing access to an adult who will listen, advise, and be supportive will increase feelings of isolation and hopelessness, possibly leading to dire consequences. Our state already faces a mental health crisis. There aren't nearly enough providers for the number of children who suffer from depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation now. HB 454 will only make the situation worse.

I respectfully ask you to not move forward on this bill. I personally know transgender children and teens who will suffer because of it. I have seen the effect of what living in the closet can do to them and the happiness and joy when they can live their truth and be open about who they are. Please, don't take that away from them.

Sincerely,

Dana Zucker

Attached witness form must be submitted with testimony. Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.

Email testimony to: familiesaging&humanservicescommittee@ohiohouse.gov.

All testimony must be submitted by May 31 at 9:00 a.m. 24 hours before hearing on June 1 at 9:00 a.m.