

**Testimony for H.B. 454**  
**Submitted by: Owen Schwartz**  
**Testifying as Opponent**

Chair Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona, Ranking Member Denson and members of the House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee,

My name is Owen Schwartz, I live in Canton, and I am a student at Perry High School. I am asking this committee to oppose the Save Adolescents from Experimentation (SAFE) Act.

Since the sponsors of this bill have very little understanding of trans healthcare, I must make a few things clear first. Gender-affirming care for trans youth *isn't* genital mutilation. Gender-affirming care for trans youth *isn't* permanent body modifications. Gender-affirming care for trans youth *isn't* initiated based on one psychologist visit. And gender-affirming care for trans youth *isn't* the same as gender-affirming care provided to trans adults.

Gender-affirming care for trans youth *is* the single solution to lowering the suicide rates for trans youth. Gender-affirming care for trans youth *is* supported by every major psychological association in the United States. Gender-affirming care for trans youth *is* currently under attack by Republicans and disbelievers of science.

According to the Trevor Project, 42% of all LGBTQ youth seriously considered attempting suicide. That included more than half of non-binary and trans youth. The Trevor Project's National Survey for 2021 furthers that 25% of trans youth who attempted suicide was unable to legally change their name or gender in their respective states. Simply put, the actions that this committee takes will either be directly responsible for saving or throwing away the lives of thousands of trans youth. I urge this body to make the right decision.

If this legislation is enacted, trans youth in Ohio are automatically at a far greater risk. Parents will be forced out of medical decisions to protect their children. Psychologists will be forced to betray their licenses by not being able to provide the care necessary for thousands of children's survival. And this state will join other Republican states who have enacted legislation that restrict gender-affirming care on the baseless, culture war scare tactics of the GOP. Ironically, the SAFE Act will actually make children less safe in Ohio, and limit the physical and mental health care of thousands.

I respectfully and strongly encourage the House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee to oppose the passage of H.B. 454. I strongly encourage the members of this committee and the Ohio House to listen to the stories of trans youth. As well, I encourage the Committee members to take measures to ensure the safety, inclusion, and acceptance of trans youth in our great state of Ohio.