

Dr. Colby Smith
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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 Colby Smith and I am a practicing pediatrician in Cincinnati, Ohio. I am currently a fellow in Adolescent Medicine with a focus on gender-affirming care. I have over 5 years' experience in caring for patients and am currently licensed to practice in Ohio.

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 impeding and interfering with medical decision making and parent/caregiver autonomy to discuss care options in consultation with their child's medical provider.

As I practice medicine, I perform a thorough evaluation on each patient and develop tailored 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.

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, particularly when gender-affirming care providers are following expert consensus guidelines and utilizing treatment modalities, which studies have demonstrated lessen mental health difficulties including suicidal ideation.**

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. This is particularly challenging given the current strain on mental health care in the United States with lengthy wait times. 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,



Colby Smith