

Sarah Pickle

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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 Chairperson Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona and Ranking Member Denson,

My name is Dr. Sarah Pickle, and I am a practicing family medicine physician. I have over 13 years' experience in caring for patients and am currently licensed to practice in Ohio. In my practice, I care for persons from birth to death. The majority of my patients are transgender, gender diverse, or non-binary. It is within this context of experience that I **implore you to vote no on HB454.**

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 medicine, 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 with the input from their trusted healthcare providers. Example of these decisions include surgery, chemotherapy, and management of other complex medical conditions.

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. **There should never be a state law that prohibit us from delivering life-saving, 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, diagnosing and treating conditions such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder, among others. I was trained to treat the whole person; 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,

Sarah Pickle, MD