

Kristy L Anderson, MSW, LISW-S  
805 Pickwick Dr. Cincinnati, OH 45255

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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 Kristy L Anderson LISW-S and I am a practicing Independently Licensed Social Worker in the State of Ohio. I have over 20 years' experience in social work practice and advocacy for youth and families 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 interfering with medical decision making and parent/caregiver autonomy to discuss care options in consultation with their child's medical provider.

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.**

As an independently licensed social worker since 2004, I am charged to follow our Social Work Code of Ethics. Two of our principles I would like to highlight:

**Ethical Principle:** *Social workers challenge social injustice.*

Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers' social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.

**Value:** *Dignity and Worth of the Person*

**Ethical Principle:** *Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.*

Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers promote clients' socially responsible self determination. Social workers seek to enhance clients' capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs. Social workers are cognizant of their dual responsibility to clients and to the broader society. They seek to resolve conflicts between clients' interests and the broader society's interests in a socially

responsible manner consistent with the values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of the profession.

Two Ethical Standards to highlight pertaining to opposition of HB 454:

### **1.01 Commitment to Clients**

Social workers' primary responsibility is to promote the well being of clients. In general, clients' interests are primary. However, social workers' responsibility to the larger society or specific legal obligations may on limited occasions supersede the loyalty owed clients, and clients should be so advised. (Examples include when a social worker is required by law to report that a client has abused a child or has threatened to harm self or others.)

### **1.02 Self Determination**

Social workers respect and promote the right of clients to self determination and assist clients in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals. Social workers may limit clients' right to self determination when, in the social workers' professional judgment, clients' actions or potential actions pose a serious, foreseeable, and imminent risk to themselves or others.

Social Workers across the state work directly with Transgender individuals and their families. We will not be able to perform our duties and provide great patient care if HB 454 is passed. The passing of the bill is in direct conflict of our profession and our Code of Ethics. This would leave thousands of social workers in conflict to provide care and could result in licensure violations.

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. 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,

Kristy L Anderson MSW, LISW-S

Cincinnati, OH