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May 25, 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,

My name is Erica Krapf, and I am a practicing pediatric neuropsychologist at Akron Children's Hospital. I have over 9 years' experience in caring for patients and am currently licensed as a psychologist 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 interfering with medical decision making and parent/caregiver autonomy to discuss care options in consultation with their child's medical provider.

As I practice neuropsychology, 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. An example of this is seeking evidence-based mental health treatment (which can include evidence-based therapies provided by a licensed psychologist or counselor, in addition to medication management of symptoms through psychiatry or general pediatrics) when their child is experiencing significant symptoms of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, or other psychological symptoms. Although I cannot prescribe medication or directly provide other medical treatments, I often counsel families that this is an important part of treatment to ensure the health and wellbeing of their child.

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.**

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. We are seeing an increase in suicidal ideation and inpatient hospitalizations for teens and young adults with untreated mental health concerns. The Trevor Project's 2020 peer reviewed study published in the Journal of Adolescent Health noted that transgender and nonbinary youth were 2 to 2.5 times more likely to experience depressive symptoms, seriously consider suicide, and attempt suicide when compared to cisgender peers. 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,



Email testimony to: familiesaging&humanservicescommittee@ohiohouse.gov. All testimony must be submitted 24 hours before hearing on June 2 at 9:00 a.m