

Jennifer McAllister, MD, IBCLC
3775 Fawnrun Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45241

June 2, 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 Jennifer McAllister and I am a practicing Pediatrician working mainly in newborn nurseries and Special Care Nurseries. I have over 12 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 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. As a newborn physician, I have experienced many cases in which "physical" anatomy may not be consistent with the infant's chromosomes. In addition to a wide spectrum of ambiguous external genitalia, gender identity is influenced by factors far beyond what one's physical characteristics may be. Because this is so nuanced, decisions regarding MEDICAL treatment for patients should be left to a patient and their physician. Period.

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' and parents' mental health every day. During a time that is supposed to be one of the most joyous in their life, unexpected MEDICAL issues often arise. As physicians, we perform and treat based on evidence and what is right for our patients. 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer McAllister". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jennifer McAllister, MD, IBCLC

Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, University of Cincinnati

Medical Director, University of Cincinnati Medical Center Newborn Nursery

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