



603 E. Town St.
Columbus, OH 43215

info@kycoho.org
614-294-5437

November 17, 2022

Ohio House Families, Aging and Human Services Committee
1 Capitol Square Columbus, OH 43215

Chairwoman Manchester, Ranking Member Denson and members of the Ohio House Families, Aging and Human Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to House Bill 454. My name is Mallory Golski, and I use she/her pronouns. I'm the civic engagement and advocacy manager for Kaleidoscope Youth Center, Ohio's largest and longest standing organization serving and supporting LGBTQIA+ youth and young adults, ages 12-24.

Much has been said and will continue to be said today about the real harm this legislation will cause. But, beyond today's testimony, I wonder: How many of you – including the bill's sponsors – have actually taken the time to talk to *any* transgender person, especially transgender youth, to learn about their lives and experiences? Have you been able to hear *their* thoughts before even considering how you'll vote on legislation that will severely impact these young people?

My colleagues and I talked to some of the young transgender, nonbinary and genderqueer people who would be most impacted by this intrusive and dangerous piece of legislation. Unfortunately, these folks are not to testify here in person, either because they're in school, they're not out or because being here could pose a risk to their safety. Here are just some of the comments they've shared:

"I strongly oppose HB 454 because it denies children the right to life-saving healthcare. Blocking access to gender-affirming healthcare will only have a negative impact. People say they're protecting children by not letting them be forced to be something they're not. But, with bills like this, you are forcing those very children to be something they're not, denying their true identities. This also would make children feel ashamed to be who they truly are. As a trans person, I have always felt that I don't belong, and this bill would further alienate the children that it affects. I urge you to put yourself in their shoes and think about how it would make you feel for people to be debating your very right to exist, all because of something small about yourself that you cannot control. Think about how angry it would make you to have your ability to be yourself taken away by people who have no idea what it's like to be you. It would hurt. That's how many people, including myself, feel about this bill. Gender-affirming healthcare saves lives. The ability to live as we truly are saves lives." – **KYC youth**

"Why are grown adults so concerned about how kids identify? That's just straight up creepy." – **15-year-old KYC youth**



“Although I’m just a cisgender girl, I can see how dangerous this would be...I can’t believe the lengths that intolerant people are willing to go to harm people in our community.” – 18-year-old KYC youth

“Transgender individuals should have the option to voice their own medical needs, and we should respect this.” – KYC youth

“I’m an LGBTQ youth currently going through HRT. Gender-affirming care has been life saving for me and is for many other people. Passing HB 454 will cause major harm and increased deaths, please keep us safe! Please don’t give any momentum to this bill and protect trans youth who need hormone replacement therapy.” – KYC youth

“As a trans youth with an unsupportive mom, I know the effects of being prevented from transition. I have severe gender dysphoria, which has led me to attempt suicide multiple times. If this bill passes, many more youth will be at risk like I was/am. Please vote against this bill.” – KYC youth

“I strongly oppose HB 454 and worry what emotional and mental health consequences this will have on youth. This will have negative health consequences and long-term impacts.” – KYC youth

“As a trans student in Ohio, I am writing to voice my support of trans and nonbinary youth in Ohio. The HB 454 bill and other bills like it should not be passed because they harm the trans community in Ohio.” – KYC youth

“I am writing in opposition to HB 454: Banning Affirmative Care bill. It is extremely important for affirming care to be extended to trans kids. It will greatly improve their mental outlook and their lives.” – KYC youth

“Please protect us.” – KYC youth

Kaleidoscope Youth Center stands in firm opposition to House Bill 454. Transgender young people aren’t nefarious. They’re not trying to intrude on other people’s lives – they just want to have the opportunity to authentically live their own.

Please trust young people when they tell us who they are, stop meddling in people’s most private health care decisions, and let trans kids have the opportunity to be themselves. Leave trans kids alone. Thank you.

