

Chairwoman Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona, Ranking Member Denson, Members of the Committee on Families, Aging, and Human Services, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify on House Bill 454, which restricts minors from receiving gender-affirming healthcare.

My name is Danielle Thrasher, my pronouns are she/her, and I am a constituent of the 95th House District residing in Marietta, Ohio, and a transgender woman.

Before I discuss why I think this bill is harmful to the people it will impact, I would like to give context to my life as a transgender Ohioan.

I publicly came out as transgender at 14 years old.

After coming out, I faced adversities both at school and at home. While my parents tried to

be supportive as they could, I was forbidden from medically transitioning.

This forced me to go through male puberty, which ultimately caused great distress on me during my adolescence.

My inability to transition put me at greater risk for transphobia from my peers and other community members who viewed my identity as a threat.

This including constant deadnaming, misgendering, use of slurs, and in a couple instances death threats.

Dealing with my inability to transition has forced me to go through years of therapy and invest thousands of dollars into correcting the effects of male puberty that I went through.

It is because of my experiences as a transgender woman and my knowledge as an advocate that I believe House Bill 454 is harmful to transgender minors living in Ohio.

Gender-affirming healthcare is endorsed by organizations like the American Psychological Association and the American Academy of Pediatricians.

Furthermore, House Bill 454 ignores the careful consideration of medical professionals to ensure that transitioning is safe and beneficial for transgender youth.

It also assumes that transgender youth receive gender-affirming surgeries.

While there are rare exceptions, this is in most part a lie meant to make transitioning appear equivalent to human experimentation.

However, what I find more concerning than these assumptions are provisions in this legislation that would require teachers, counselors, and medical officials to out trans youth to their families.

This puts trans youth at risk of a negatively impacted home life and in some cases, homelessness.

The National Center for Transgender Equality estimates that between 20-40% of the 1.6 million homeless youth in the United States are transgender or gender diverse in some way, shape, or form.

As a political organizer, the thought of our elected officials sitting in the people's house authorizing the increase of this statistic for the sake of pleasing lobbying organizations like the Center for Christian Values sends chills down my spine.

While I as an adult will not be directly affected by this legislation, I worry for transgender youth who come after me.

I worry for the youth that will be forced off their hormone therapy in the event this bill is enacted into law.

I worry for the youth that will be forced into a vulnerable position after being outed to their families.

I worry for these youth and the adversities they will face because of this legislation.

As I conclude my testimony, I ask all of you to consider very carefully how youth in the state of Ohio will be negatively impacted by the effects of House Bill 454.