

Dear Chair Susan Manchester and the Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee,

I am writing to oppose H.B. No. 454, as it will lead to further harm to our trans and gender-diverse youth.

My name is Samantha Nandyal, and I am a Family Medicine Resident Physician working in Cincinnati, Ohio. This bill is a direct affront to patient safety. It will limit youth's ability to pursue a life that aligns with their truth, a barrier that leads to shocking rates of suicide, violence, and poor health outcomes due to isolation and mental health issues. I am so grateful to have gotten to work with amazing physicians and community leaders that are passionate about equity and patient safety. The experiences I had with providing gender-affirming care is part of the reason I chose primary care: because gender-affirming care is vital, it is a human right, it is life-saving, it is at the forefront of the care a trans person needs to be well.

There seems to be a misrepresentation of what it means to be a minor seeking gender-affirming care. A picture is painted of a young person, "too young to know better", making a surgical decision that they will regret. I cannot express enough how inaccurate this is. A systematic review of 56 studies from 1991-2017 examining the effect of gender transition on transgender well-being: 93% found an improvement in well-being, 7% reported mixed or null findings, No studies demonstrated worse well-being outcomes. The youth that I have care for that come to safe providers seeking gender affirming care are reflective, self-assured, and know that taking steps towards their true selves is necessary for their well-being. Gender affirming care is conducted by well-trained professionals with algorithmic and legal considerations throughout the process.

H.B 454 is not written to reflect current medical guidelines and practices and bases its understanding of a physician's role in pediatric gender affirming care in transphobia and bias. Gender affirming care goes beyond pharmacological and surgical interventions in youth. Restricting gender affirming care will further alienate children who need additional support by the healthcare system.

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