

My name is Tammy McInerney, from Toledo and I am the parent of a nonbinary 13-year-old. Venus has socially transitioned and uses they/them pronouns. Venus was relentlessly bullied in public school when they came out resulting in us pulling them from school to homeschool. Venus knew in first grade they were queer and didn't identify as a boy or a girl but didn't tell us until third grade.

Venus doesn't want to be thought of, labeled, or forced to dress as one sex or another. While some days they lean toward masculine presentation they also have some days they are a bit more feminine. I feel there is no reason to use labels and force them to be female as assigned at birth in any way. They are free to be who they are. Gender can be very fluid and allowing children and teenagers to express themselves as they are, hurts no one. However, not allowing them to be themselves and hide causes mental health issues and suicidal thoughts.

How a person feels and what they need dictates the path of what a transition looks like. This path may include a change in name, gender presentation, and pronouns. It also may include body modification. Having body functions and parts that make a person feel totally male or female can cause gender dysphoria, which is defined as discomfort or distress in having to identify as the sex assigned at birth. This can be mild or so severe they feel suicide is the only option. Medical and mental health professionals are essential to help non-binary and trans young people in these situations. Our family is seeking medical care as well as exploring age-appropriate options to meet their needs as a non-binary individual. We selected a team at a gender clinic in Ohio to help us with this. This care will be vital for the medical and mental well-being of my child and HB 454 would make that close to impossible. HB 454 ties the hands of these professionals to help families like mine. Medical interventions in trans and non-binary youth aren't taken lightly and there is usually a multidisciplinary process to proceed with puberty blockers, period cessation meds, and, in rarer cases in youth, surgery. These should remain as options and the decision should be made between the youth, parents, doctors and mental health professionals. There are many studies showing the importance gender affirming care is as well as studies showing a lack of regret that is often thrown out to support bans on affirming care. For the sake of time, I will include a few of these at the bottom of this document. The government doesn't need to "swoop in" and "save" these kids. The government needs to stay out of the medical and mental health decisions of my non-binary child and all trans and non-binary children in Ohio! I truly feel HB 454 is deep rooted in discrimination and unjustified fear instead of trying to "protect young people". For example, in Ohio a teen, with parental consent, can obtain plastic surgery including breast augmentation and breast reduction as well as other surgical options for purely cosmetic reasons. Why would it be ok for a cisgender teen to elect to have these surgeries but a trans or non-binary teen cannot obtain gender affirming care? That is pure discrimination in my opinion!

The mental health care stipulations in HB 454 are very damaging to our trans and non-binary young people. Mental health professionals are under a duty to notify and break confidentiality only if a person is a danger to themselves or others and being non-binary or trans doesn't

qualify as either! To require medical and mental health professionals to “out” these kids to their parents is absurd! Youth, especially those with a higher risk for mental health problems, NEED a safe place to talk and express open and honest feelings. HB 454 will require these professionals to out youth to their parents, potentially putting them in dangerous situations and causing additional mental distress. HB 454 relies on the fallacy that every parent has unconditional love for their child. Not all parents are as open and understanding as my husband and I. I have personally met members of the LGBTQ community who have been thrown out of their houses, beaten, starved, treated horribly by their own parents and families after they came out to them, this is not unconditional love! HB 454 will put kids in danger. HB 454 will increase mental health complications and suicides in our trans and non-binary kids. I am here to beg you to consider the damage HB 454 will do. Talk to the people this will affect. Learn more about the LGBTQ youth in Ohio. Put your fear and misguided need to protect kids that don't need this kind of protection aside and consider the real consequences of your actions. Please vote NO on HB 454!

Tammy McInerney

Toledo, OH

Study References

[Association of Gender Identity Acceptance with Fewer Suicide Attempts among Transgender and Nonbinary Youth](#)

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[Family Rejection as a Predictor of Suicide Attempts and Substance Misuse Among Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Adults](#)

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