

Testimony from Conrad Yoder, against HB454  
November 15, 2022

Chairperson Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona, Ranking Member Denson, and members of the House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Conrad Yoder. I am a resident of Millersburg in Holmes County, and I am employed as a software engineer, and I lead a faith-based gathering in Holmes County, supporting local LGBTQ people. I am strongly opposed to House Bill 454, banning gender affirming healthcare for minors.

Scientific research demonstrates that medical gender-affirming health care greatly improves the mental health and overall well-being of gender diverse, transgender, and nonbinary children and adolescents. Measures to restrict this critical care not only run counter to scientific evidence but also threaten the mental health of TGNB youth, many of whom experience gender dysphoria—clinically significant distress or impairment caused by a discrepancy between a person’s sex assigned at birth and their gender identity.

I have a close friend who grew up in Holmes County – he is a trans man who now lives in Colorado. He experienced severe depression and health issues, while struggling with gender dysphoria as a teen, and attempted suicide. I am very thankful he did not succeed in killing himself, and that he is now thriving in his personal and professional life, after receiving the gender-affirming care that he did as a minor, and was able to fully transition from being assigned female at birth, to a man today. If this bill would have been in place back then, I fear we would be speaking about him now in the past tense. The Trevor Project reports that LGBTQ youth are four times as likely to attempt suicide than their peers. A recent national survey on LGBTQ youth mental health found that 54%—more than half—of transgender and nonbinary youth have seriously considered attempting suicide.

This bill would also have ripple effects of causing hospitals and doctors to give substandard care to children and adolescents in other areas of medicine, as it threatens physicians with civil lawsuits, and hospitals with withdrawal of public funds. Doctors and hospitals will become more reticent to providing necessary, and even life-saving care, out of real fear of lawsuits, loss of medical licenses, and loss of funding.

I consider myself a follower of Jesus, and take my faith very seriously. The most important command that Christ gives His followers is to, in all things, treat others as we want to be treated. I know if I were in the shoes of these at-risk trans and non-binary youth, scared of sharing what was going on inside of me for fear of being punished for that, I would not want this bill to be law, to prevent me getting the help I needed to just merely exist.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful bill. Voting NO will save the lives of our at-risk children, and allow them to become healthy adults and well-adjusted members of society. I thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to take any questions you may have.