

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 Dr. Sage Hunt, 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, and 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 cared 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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