

November 15, 2022

Chairwoman Susan Manchester  
Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee  
Ohio House of Representatives

RE: Opponent to HB 454

Chairwoman Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona, Ranking Member Denson and members of the committee:

My name is Allison Ritting and I am a resident of Columbus, Ohio. I am writing to voice my concern about a dangerous bill being heard in the House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee. HB 454 would be detrimental to the safety and wellbeing of LGBTQ+ youth and their families. As a member of the LGBTQ+ community and a pediatric healthcare provider, I believe that this bill is a direct threat to the mental and physical health of LGBTQ+ individuals. Please do not support this bill and vote no if it comes up for a vote.

This legislation includes provisions that deny care to vulnerable youth, obligate public and private school officials to put students at risk, and penalize clinicians for providing support informed by the family and medical team. It is unlawful for any piece of legislation to impact a parent's ability to make the best choices when caring for the complex and dynamic needs of their child.

Gender affirming care is essential in ensuring the mental health and wellbeing of a LGBTQ+ youth. Statistics from the Trevor Project indicate that transgender youth are at an elevated risk for depression and suicidal thoughts. Access to gender affirming care and mental health care is essential and this bill directly violates parental rights by prohibiting life-saving medical treatment. The government should not be able to interfere in important healthcare decisions between parents and healthcare providers.

We must protect children, including LGBTQ+ youth, and ensure that they have access to best-practice health treatment. HB454 puts already vulnerable LGBTQ+ youth at risk of losing access to vital healthcare. Therefore, I request that you do not support this bill and vote no if it comes up for a vote. Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony in opposition to HB 454.

Sincerely,

*Allison Ritting*

Allison Ritting