

Dear Chairwoman Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona and Ranking Member Denison,

I am writing today to urge you to stop HB 454. It is dangerous legislation. Please allow me the latitude to offer you an allegory that proves my point.

Imagine, if you will, that you are a successful business owner, and you own a beautiful, herd of horses. You spend every day investing in your herd, training them to be strong and capable of carrying any type of rider, from the least skilled to the most skilled. You pour your heart and soul into the care of your herd so they continue to be strong and capable, long after they leave your care.

Now imagine, one day, you discover one of your horses is different. And, you realize it's not just a horse, but a beautiful, rare unicorn that has been disguising itself as a horse. You see, it fears revealing itself to you and the herd for fear of retribution. The other horses may shun it, or actively seek to harm it. In fact, you only realized you have a rare, beautiful unicorn in your care because it became ill and needed help.

Now you know all about horses. But you have never cared for a unicorn before. And you, being neither horse nor unicorn, can't possibly guess how to treat the unicorn to make it healthy again. You ask all your friends for help, but no one has experience with unicorns. Luckily for you, one brave soul points you to an expert.

This expert has trained their whole life on the off-chance that they will someday be privileged enough to treat a unicorn. And you, knowing this rare soul must be preserved, decide to listen to the expert. In fact, you are extremely grateful that such an expert exists. Because they are also rare and should be treasured. Without the expert, the rare beautiful unicorn may not survive.

Now, I am, in no way comparing our beautiful transgender children to livestock. However, by removing a parent's right to seek appropriate care for their child, you are seeking to treat all children the same by removing access to care and the experts who provide it.

I am a resident of this state and a parent. I have child that is nonbinary and close friends with transgender children. No one deliberately chooses the most difficult path life has to offer. In fact, time and again, you will see the exact opposite. People always seek the path of least resistance. Why then do you persist in thinking this is a choice people are making? This isn't a choice. This is the decision to live authentically because doing anything else may result in tragedy.

Nothing should be more sacred than the relationship between medical providers and the rights of parents and patients to seek and receive the best possible care for their children. I am not a medical expert. Neither are you. It is not appropriate for you to practice medicine or override evidence-based medical decision making. I urge you to vote no on HB454.

Sincerely,
Tamara B. Hatcher
Liberty Township, OH