

**Elizabeth Auckley**

Opponent

House Bill 454

Ohio House Family, Aging & Human Services Committee

Thank you, Chairman Manchester, Vice Chair Al Cutrona, Ranking Member Denson, and members of the House Family, Aging & Human Services Committee. My name is Elizabeth Auckley, and I am a fourth year medical student in Columbus, Ohio. I am providing testimony in opposition to House Bill 454.

I am strongly opposed to HB 454 because gender affirming care is an important and necessary part of medicine for youths and adults.

In my clinical experience, I have witnessed first-hand how vital gender affirming care is for our patients. Simply using the correct pronouns for general medical care of transgender patients is critical for establishing a trusting patient-physician relationship. I have seen transgender and nonbinary patients be identified with the incorrect pronouns and witnessed the damage this causes to patient care, trust, and education. Gender affirming care, including gender affirming surgeries, puberty blockers, and gender affirming hormones, are further necessary aspects of medical care to our patients. Without access to these medical treatments, holistic health care is incomplete. The research studies in the medical literature has found that transgender youths suffer from decreased access to general medical care and I believe that HB454 would further exacerbate existing barriers to all medical care for this population (reference: Providing Affirmative Care to Transgender and Gender Diverse Youth: Disparities, Interventions, and Outcomes. David C Call et al. *Curr Psychiatry Rep.* 2021. 2021 Apr 13;23(6):33.doi: 10.1007/s11920-021-01245-9.). Further, transgender and non-binary youths who have received gender affirming care have been shown to have significantly lower rates of depression and suicidality 12 months after treatment (reference: Mental Health Outcomes in Transgender and Nonbinary Youths Receiving Gender-Affirming Care. Diana M Tordoff et al. *JAMA Netw Open.* 2022. 2022 Feb; 1;5(2):e220978. doi: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.0978). Based on this scientific study, HB 454, if passed, may worsen mental health and suicidality of our youth population.

As a medical student in the operating room, I have seen the sheer joy of a transgender patient receiving a gender affirming surgery. This patient's long wait and story of happiness in finally undergoing this procedure is just one example of how important gender affirming care is. The medical literature has studied how to best support transgender and non-binary youths and recommends gender affirming care as the gold standard of medical care (reference: Providing Affirmative Care to Transgender and Gender Diverse Youth: Disparities, Interventions, and Outcomes. David C Call et al. *Curr Psychiatry Rep.* 2021. 2021 Apr 13;23(6):33.doi:

10.1007/s11920-021-01245-9.). I believe HB 454 threatens to make necessary medical care unavailable for patients. This would not only deny patients of the medically recognized first-line treatment, but also cause further damage to the patient-physician relationship by prohibiting necessary care and the acceptance of transgender medicine. I can not imagine practicing in a health care system that does not recognize gender affirming care as a necessary aspect of health care.

Finally, my clinical experiences with gender affirming care were a critical part of my medical education. I believe future medical students of Ohio need to learn about gender affirming care in real, clinical practice to become well-rounded physicians.

As an Ohio resident of 24 years and a future physician, I strongly urge you to vote against this bill and I thank you for your time and consideration.