

To the Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee for the Ohio House of Representatives,

I am writing this testimony because I oppose House Bill 454.

The language of this bill creates a false narrative about the experiences of transgender youth and seeks to further isolate transgender youth.

The most immediate danger of House Bill 454 comes from Sec. 3129.05 B. This section prohibits nurses, counselors, teachers, principals, and other school officials and staff from withholding information about a minor's perception of their own gender from that minor's parents. If a child is questioning their gender and knows that their parents will not approve, they will likely not have a private counselor or other adult role models outside of their school since school is where they spend most of their time. This section will make it unsafe for a child to confide in any adult at their school because that adult will have to either break the law or tell that child's parents, which could result in a dangerous home environment for the child. Without school counselors and other school staff, transgender and gender-questioning children will lose a space where they can safely express themselves, improve their mental health, and discover who they truly are. This in no way protects the children of Ohio. If anything, it endangers them.

If you, the Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee, truly want to protect the children of Ohio, you will rescind this bill.

Sincerely,

Nic Gill