

## **Mark W Lehman**

Chair Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee, thank you for this opportunity to voice my opposition to House Bill 454. This dangerous legislation is the opposite of safe and targets an already vulnerable group of Ohio youth by denying them access to life saving affirming medical care and revoking funding to hospitals who provide it. This bill would also threaten the safety of students in schools by forcing school guidance counselors and staff to abide by new rules that would be in direct conflict with the ethical guidance of their fields as well as title IV.

I am 68. I am a Gay Man. I came out when I was 22 in 1976. It took me into my twenties to finally admit to myself my sexual identity. The truth is that I knew I was Gay when I was in 2nd grade. As the years added on that identity became stronger in me. I had to push it down because in the 1960's no one spoke of being Gay , and if they did it was always negative. Being Gay is who I am... this is as natural for me as it is for straight people with their identity. The Trans community is no different....I have several Trans friends and their stories are all the same...they knew when they were young that their outside appearance did not match their inside self... they all recount being trapped in the wrong body at a young age... this Bill that is being proposed is just wrong...these Trans Youth know that they are trapped in the wrong body and they want to live their authentic self... don't let your own sexual identity deny others the right to live theirs.

I urge you to oppose HB 454 and protect our state's youth.