

## **Algernon Lutwak**

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'm both transgender and a medical student, so I've had a variety of opportunities to see gender-affirming care handled both well and poorly, and to see what kind of a difference it makes. I've worked with similarly dedicated nonbinary students who regularly face discrimination in surgical and medical practice, helped patients check and modify their information in our partner hospitals' care systems, and seen a trans teenager in the ED after a suicide attempt whose provider didn't know to use her pronouns. Furthermore, as a trans man, I've had to switch providers because my PCP attempted to make prescribing hormones contingent on unrelated compliance issues, as she saw it as an optional bargaining chip instead of care I needed. This bill would put youth across the state at risk of losing not only gender-affirming care, but trust in their providers and care in general. It would reward the kind of self-suppression that contributes to poor mental health and depression in our community, as well as the bigotry that threatens our health through bias and stress.

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