

## **Melanie Phillips**

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.

My ten year old son is an amazing kid. He is an honor role student. He is a talented athlete and he is thoughtful and loving and a little mischievous. He writes me little love notes. He sticks up for his friends. He also happens to be transgender. He is very private about this fact. In fact I find it difficult to advocate for him and maintain the privacy and dignity he should be afforded. My child is lucky to have supportive parents, teachers, friends and gender affirming medical care. My greatest wish is to give him a childhood free from hate and discrimination so that he can continue to thrive as he is now. We are pre puberty right now so he is doing well but I know that puberty is right around the corner and I know that difficult times are headed our way. It pains me that some people will not see my child for the amazing kid he is. That some people will hate him without bothering to know him. I know that I will not be able to prevent him from experiencing hate but I will do my best. I am an excellent mother and my child is very healthy and happy and well adjusted and I want to keep it that way. Gender affirming medical care is life saving. Children like mine who have supportive family and access to gender affirming care do very well. The road will not be easy for him. Transgender people face job discrimination, healthcare discrimination, higher rates of homelessness and hate crimes. I am embarrassed to admit that prior to having a transgender child I was transphobic. I didn't understand it. I didn't get it. I remember in high school I approached a classmate whose gender was ambiguous and I made an unkind remark. I won't forget the look on his face that day and I regret it to this day. Your opinion does not and will not change my child's identity. He deserves to have the best shot at survival and happiness he can have. Please do not pass anti-transgender legislation in any form. Please take a moment to get to know a child like mine and listen to the families and loved ones on what the child needs and trust that we know what is best for our children.

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