

Holly Hengartner

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 name is Holly Hengartner (she/her/hers). I am a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor and Supervisor, licensed by the state of Ohio. I am strongly opposed to House Bill 454, preventing transgender youth from receiving proper medical care. I work primarily with children, adolescents, and adults within the LGBTQ+ community. I cannot tell you how essential it is for LGBTQ+ youth to have access to the resources and medical interventions NECESSARY for their mental health and well-being. Part of this bill indicates that interventions such as hormone blockers are unsafe for individuals under 18. From a mental health perspective, these interventions are extremely essential for the safety of these youth and can actually save their lives. The rates of suicide in the transgender community are astounding and having access to these resources can be life saving. Having a safe space to explore gender identity is also essential for youth and confidentiality in this is also a safety precaution. Many LGBTQ+ youth come from unsupportive households and information being disclosed to these parents can be detrimental to the mental health, safety, and well-being of the youth. I have personally seen significant and life-altering results for many youth who have had access to these interventions and resources. Gender dysphoria is not something that goes away and it often requires these resources and interventions in order to be managed and for the individual to live a functional life. I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. Holly Hengartner, LPCC-S