

Fei Triolo

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 Fei. I am a nonbinary transgender woman, my pronouns are she/her or they/them, I am a young adult, and I was born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio. I am strongly opposed to House Bill 454, preventing transgender youth from receiving proper medical care. For trans and queer youth, we cannot simply ignore the presence of bills like these in government.

Since the moment I realized I was transgender, I was deathly afraid to discuss my identity at my school, with my parents, and especially my doctor, since I knew bills like this one could be passed at any moment, making my life significantly more difficult and stressful. That kind of fear kept me miserable and isolated for a very long time. The truth of the matter is that the scientific consensus on gender and sex completely affirms the identities of transgender people such as myself, according to American Psychological Association, American Medical Association, American Psychoanalytic Association, Human Rights Campaign, American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Osteopathic Pediatricians, United Nations, United Kingdom's National Health Service, and many other reputable organizations. Furthermore it is an absolute matter of fact that access to gender-affirming healthcare overall greatly increases the mental health and physical wellbeing of trans people of all ages. It is true that transgender youth struggle with a number of mental health issues, of which I am very much familiar with, but those issues quickly go away, leaving trans children on par with cisgender children when they have access to gender affirming care, be allowed to socially transition, and live in a supporting environment. Concerns about permanent medical risks on children are also a moot point in this debate. Puberty blockers are completely reversible and even more effective when started at a young age, but that's entirely beside the point. There are risks of misdiagnosis and risks of permanent side effects for any medical treatment, yet doctors will still prescribe antipsychotics for children with depression, they will still treat a child's broken limb, they will still prescribe Adderall for childhood ADHD and they will still use chemotherapy on cancer children. I'm asking you, how is the case of gender-affirming healthcare any different? Keep in mind that trans youth have to go through years of therapy and diagnosis with trained professionals before they can get started on any sort of treatment.

The only reason I can see this bill passing is not because of some platitudes about 'wanting to protect our children' because it's ratification would actively hurt them. Nor is it about 'family values' considering the fact that the bill actively disregards parental consent. No, the only reason this bill is even being considered is an attempt to medically discriminate against transgender people and try to legislate away transgender youth.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this ignorant bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.