



**House Family, Aging, and Human Services Committee  
HB 454 - Opponent Testimony  
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Good morning, Chairperson Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona, Ranking Member Denson, and members of the House Family, Aging, and Human Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Children's Defense Fund-Ohio in opposition of House Bill 454, regarding gender affirming care for minors in Ohio.

CDF-Ohio is a statewide non-profit organization which serves as an independent voice for all children. Born out of the civil rights movement, with more than four decades of advocacy in Ohio, it is the mission of the Children's Defense Fund to champion policies and programs that lift children out of poverty, protect them from abuse and neglect, and ensure their access to appropriate and targeted health care, quality education, and nutritional wellness.

This bill and bills like it have been introduced in 15 states around the country. Laws banning gender-affirming care are on hold in Alabama, Arizona and Texas after judges blocked enforcement. These bills represent huge legislative overreach. Legislators should not be in the business of making medical decisions, and they should not come between a child and access to the care the physician, and the child's parents feel is in the child's best interest.

Most major U.S. medical associations, including those in the fields of pediatrics, endocrinology, psychiatry, and psychology, have issued statements recognizing the medical necessity and appropriateness of gender affirming care for youth, often remarking on the harmful effects of denying access to these services. These



include statements from the [American Medical Association](#), [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), the [Endocrine Society](#), [American Psychological Association](#), [American Psychiatric Association](#), and the [World Professional Association for Transgender Health](#), among [others](#).

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, State policies restricting youth access to gender affirming care could have significant health and other implications for LGBTQ+ youth, their parents, and health care providers. LGBTQ+ youth experience higher rates of depression, anxiety, and suicidality than their non-LGBTQ+ peers. Inability to access gender affirming care, such as [puberty suppressors](#) and [hormone therapy](#), has been linked to worse mental health outcomes for transgender youth.

Ohio is in the middle of a mental health crisis. One in five children in Ohio struggle with mental health. Legislation like HB 454 will further exacerbate this crisis by prohibiting the counseling and treatment children and their parents are seeking. We heard testimony from several physicians from Children's Hospitals around the state in June that spoke to the established standards of care, careful conversations, shared decision making, and counseling that are all part of gender affirming care in Ohio.

As in any area of medicine, the best evidence-based care for treating health conditions come from established standards of care, not from politicians trying to restrict the rights of parents and children to access needed care. Our most vulnerable children will pay the heaviest price for lawmakers' efforts to control, limit, or ban gender-affirming care.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to HB 454.