



**Opposition Testimony:
House Bill 6 – Transgender Sports
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As Executive Director of the Ohio Psychiatric Physicians Association (OPPA), a statewide medical specialty organization, I provide this testimony on behalf of OPPA regarding House Bill 6. The OPPA represents more than 1,000 physicians who specialize in diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of mental illnesses, including substance use disorders, in children, adolescents and adults. As such, OPPA is committed to advocating for the mental health needs of all individuals, including transgender individuals, and those with Gender Dysphoria.

Gender Dysphoria is a diagnosis that is identified to individuals who experience clinically significant distress associated with a persisting incongruence between their experienced and born gender, and it can manifest in a number of ways (DSM-5). Individuals with Gender Dysphoria very commonly experience mental health comorbidities, including anxiety and depression, and they experience suicidal thinking at a substantially higher rate than individuals without Gender Dysphoria. Transgender individuals often endure social stigmatization and discrimination which negatively impacts self-esteem and worsens mental health issues.¹

We are troubled by the provisions of HB 6. As mentioned above, the transgender population endures unique health challenges, and these may be compounded by anti-transgender policies. Harmful legislation that excludes and isolates transgender youth from access to the same activities as their peers further marginalizes vulnerable youth, which can exacerbate lack of acceptance and mental health problems.

Furthermore, school sports and extracurricular activities are important for social and emotional development and can have been shown to have a positive impact on the mental health and wellness of all participants. Ohio's transgender students deserve to live their lives and experience a normal childhood just like any other child does.

The Ohio Psychiatric Physicians Association (OPPA) is deeply concerned about any efforts - legal, legislative, and otherwise – which might worsen health outcomes for this already marginalized population of young people in our state. Therefore, we do not believe it is appropriate to move forward with HB 6 at this time.

Thank you for the consideration of our remarks and as always please feel free to reach out with any questions.

¹ American Psychiatric Association. (Reviewed August 2022) *What is Gender Dysphoria?*
<https://psychiatry.org/patients-families/gender-dysphoria/what-is-gender-dysphoria>