

Submitter: A Parent of A Trans Kid

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2458

I oppose this legislation as it would limit the ability of therapists to question a child seeking gender affirmative care which I believe can be harmful if the child is not mature enough to weigh the true risks of that care and medicalization of a gender transition. Minor children are not allowed to drink, gamble, or vote, yet they are allowed to modify their gender medically with permanent physical harm including loss of fertility, diminished sexual function, a lifetime of hormones, major surgeries, and irreversible changes to voice, hairline, and health risks such as cancer. A child cannot weigh the magnitude of these lifelong medical decisions without careful examination and discourse with professional medical providers. Medical care must include a holistic analysis of the child's mental health, which requires questioning the root cause of the gender dysphoria. A therapist must be allowed to ask questions and have a dialogue with the child without necessarily affirming the identified gender. This is not "conversion therapy" when the child is clearly conflicted and in distress about their birth gender. Therapists must be able to explore topics related to gender but also other trauma and depression in assessing the whole mental health picture. I speak to these issues from experience. My child at age 16 identified as transgender and immediately demanded medical transition. After 4 years of therapy and growth, they are now settled on a nonbinary identity that does not include medical harm to their body. If they had been affirmed without question, there would certainly have been permanent physical and mental harm done to them by the medical establishment. They are now happy with their identity. I am deeply saddened that the medical community does not question the harm that is being done to children in the name of "affirmative care".