

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a nurse practitioner and primary care provider. I am in support of this bill because I have seen how difficult and stigmatizing it is for members of our LGBTQIA+ community to access healthcare. I still recall a transgender woman who had severe depression and suicidal ideation because she could not access reproductive healthcare for 3+ months. Finally out of desperation she found an online prescriber and had to pay out of pocket for life saving, gender affirming medication that insurance would not cover. When establishing as a new patient, she asked me if I would at all be willing to cover a transition fill until she could find an in person provider with training in gender affirming care including hormone therapy, and I told her that I would continue her script for as long as necessary before we found her another physician. I started doing my own learning on the prescription of hormone regimens for transgendered persons because I never received any training in my schooling, and neither did my 3 internal medicine physician colleagues with 20+ years of experience each. It took 3+ months for this patient to find a long-term prescriber, and note this was an OBGYN rather than an endocrinologist or provider who primarily worked with the LGBTQIA+ population.

This is but one case of why we need to protect the healthcare rights of our queer community because across the country there is an onslaught of legislation constantly trying to remove these rights. I briefly glanced at arguments in opposition, many of which are truly ill informed. It sounds like many parents in particular believe that they control their children, their children should have no autonomy and no decisions can ever be made without parental consent. Which is precisely why a shocking percentage of genderqueer teens suffer from severe depression – not surprising that the ones who suffer the most have parents like those writing in opposition to this bill. Children know their identity, and at 15 which is well past puberty that is further solidified. By REMOVING the barrier of parental consent for health care to 15 year old people, we are specifically freeing these individuals from further harm. If we can allow a 15 year old to start driving, then we can create safe systems for 15 year olds to choose how to affirm their gender identity– this includes sterilization procedures. Every medical intervention is a risk vs benefit discussion, and I have faith that the medical community and hopefully the larger community as a whole can rise to the challenge of creating safe systems to support people suffering from gender dysphoria. The ones most strongly opposed to this bill and who verbalize concern that children are taken advantage of, are the ones

I also agree that any interference with health care should have serious consequences. Although I do not inherently believe incarceration exists to better society, at this time it is one of the only systems in place for holding individuals who wish to harm others accountable. In the future, I hope this can be replaced with a system of reform so that these individuals can learn that all lives are worthy of health care, and not just ones that are white, cis-gendered and heterosexual.

Thank you,  
Ashley Chan MSN, FNP-C

