



CITY OF PITTSBURGH
LGBTQIA+ COMMISSION
CITY - COUNTY BUILDING

September 21, 2023

The Honorable Paul Schemel
150B East Wing
PO Box 202090
Harrisburg PA 17120-2090

Dear Representative Schemel,

We are writing to you today because you are the prime sponsor of HB 138, which has the short title "An Act amending Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in limitation of time, providing for gender affirmation treatments."

The proposed legislation's title appears benign and the purpose seems merely to extend a statute of limitations for medical malpractice for a specific type of care. However, your proposed legislation does far more than to try to create a future legal opportunity for formerly un-emancipated minors.

Your bill does not simply extend to age 30 an entitlement to bring a civil action arising from gender affirmation treatment from the general two-year statute of limitations for medical malpractice. We see a primary intent of the bill is to dissuade medical doctors from providing gender-affirming care to transgender persons, primarily adolescents who have the clinical condition called gender dysphoria. This condition is marked by anxiety, depression, self-harm, and suicide.

It is well established that gender-affirming care--including the uncommon use of puberty-blockers, hormone treatment, and surgical interventions--significantly lead to positive outcomes in the treatment of gender dysphoria. These treatments dramatically improve the quality of life for nearly all who are treated and these treatments literally save lives.

Medical organizations that work to improve, safeguard, and/or communicate widely accepted practices for medical and mental health treatments of children and adolescents including gender-affirming care for the treatment of gender dysphoria include: the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the American Psychiatric Association, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the Endocrine Society, and the World Professional Association for Transgender Health.

The Trevor Project's 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health found:

- "86% of transgender and nonbinary youth say recent debates about state laws restricting the rights of transgender people have negatively impacted their mental health. A majority of those trans youth (55%) said it impacted their mental health 'very negatively';

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Sarah Rosso • Rev. Deryck Tines • Guillermo Velazquez

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- "45% of LGBTQ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year, and nearly 20% of LGBTQ youth attempted suicide in the past year."

The effect of your bill — even if it does not become law — is to bolster the harmful culture war rhetoric aimed at transgender, non-binary and intersex youth. This harm for some children and adolescents who are growing up in Pennsylvania will be deadly.

Our Commission strongly encourages you to learn more about transgender youth and what they experience. Should you do that, we believe what you find will compel you to withdraw HB 138 from consideration by the House Judiciary Committee. Transgender youth exist. They deserve access to the best medical and mental healthcare available. Please withdraw HB 138.

Sincerely,

Sarah Rosso
Co-Chair
Pittsburgh LGBTQIA+ Commission

Sue Kerr
Co-Chair
Pittsburgh LGBTQIA+ Commission

Billy Hileman
Secretary
Pittsburgh LGBTQIA+ Commission

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