

HB 2791  
Addison Bartelli  
Private Citizen  
2/25/2024  
aeb+ksleg@ku.edu  
Written Only  
Opponent

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Addison Bartelli and I'm a voter in Johnson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791

Being able to access gender-affirming care has made a major positive impact in my life. It's offered me security in my identity and has led me to be the most sociable, confident, and comfortable I've ever been. For me and so many others that I know, being able to live our lives through our identities is integral to our understandings of personal liberty and individualism. Overall, all the measures in this bill are either redundant and/or exist primarily to fearmonger. For instance, medications have been safely used to delay puberty for decades in adolescents, but the bill frames it as abusive to use these medications to safely allow a child time to explore their identity. Likewise, millions of Americans take the exact same scripts I do to treat menopause and high blood pressure. The language this bill requires providers to use in offering informed consent wrongly frame these medications as experimental and recklessly risky, in a way that would never have to be dealt with by cis Americans taking the exact same drugs. Informed consent for hormone replacement care is already required by law and is currently well implemented to ensure patients understand the associated risks of their care and their relative scales. The framing of the bill seems to build on the false presumption that minors are frequently medicated with no examination or diagnosis, possibly behind the backs of parents. In reality, there are no providers in the state that provide these treatments to minors without therapy and the concurring opinion of parents and medical professionals. Like with everything else a doctor does for its patients, Kansans deserve the right to make their own decisions in their healthcare as advised by their doctors. Overall this bill over engineers so called solutions to problems that already have answers. Transition care is safe and well studied. When children do transition, the consequences, good and bad, are thoroughly discussed between the adolescent, their parents, and providers. Medical authorities overwhelmingly advocate against bills like these for good reason, and I hope the committee can listen to trans Kansas and come to understand that.

Once again, I thank all of you for taking to time to hear my story as I encourage you all to vote no on the passage of HB 2791. Thank you.

HB 2791  
Alexis Goertzen  
Private citizen  
9/18/1990  
alexisgoertzen@gmail.com  
WRITTEN ONLY  
OPPONENT

Members of the committee, thank you for giving me time to share my thoughts on HB 2791. My name is Alexis Goertzen, a Reno county voter. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on HB 2791.

I'm asking for you to vote no on HB 2971 as this is a bill that would inhibit quality of life for trans children, if passed. While this bill may not impact my household currently, I know several who it would and one day it may be mine. I will continue to fight for the future possibilities of not just my 3 children, but all children.

Why would we deny a child of health care and then claim to be pro life? I would venture to say this bill does not emphasize pro life ideals or basic human rights. Placing laws this broad, that are non affirming to human beings is detrimental to the mental health of our society. I would like to believe those in higher power to make decisions as heavy as this one, would choose to vote in a way that is affirming.

While people may not understand those this detrimental bill would affect, I'm asking for law makers to be the bridge builders and look at ALL sides and land on the side of human rights.

Thank you so much for taking the time to hear my thoughts on this bill. I highly encourage you all to vote no of the passage of HB 2791 as it could save a child's life. Thank you.

February 25, 2024

To: Members of Kansas Legislation

Regarding: **Testimony in Opposition of HB 2791** – The “Forbidding Abusive Child Transitions Act”

My name is Amanda Mogoi. I am a resident of Kansas, and I am a proud nurse. As a nurse practitioner, I provide healthcare to nearly 2000 Kansans at M-Care Healthcare in Wichita. I have worked in healthcare since I was 16 years old, starting as a certified nurse’s aide and eventually earning my master’s degree in nursing in 2016. I am honored to have been in rooms when life begins at birth and when life comes to an end. At both events, patients are typically surrounded by those who love them and there are a wide range of emotions felt by those in the room. I’ve laughed and I’ve cried with patients and their families. I think of my patients often, considering best courses for care or alternatives for greater efficacy. I smile when I think of their happiness and unfortunately, I can picture many scared faces of those scared to lose their right to seek healthcare in Kansas. I am invested in their physical and mental health, and I want them to be well. I feel deeply protective of the young people whose families trust me with their medical care. This testimony is presented as opposition to HB 2791, which will negatively impact transgender minor’s ability to live their lives with joy, acceptance, safety, and social and medical gender affirmation.

Nursing is based on 4 key principles – 1. Autonomy: the right to self-determine a course of care for one’s own self. 2. Beneficence: the promotion of good, ensuring that the patient’s best interest is always considered above the nurse’s personal values or beliefs. 3. Justice: fairness and impartiality regardless of age, gender, race, religion, socioeconomic status, or sexuality. And 4. Nonmaleficence: avoidance or minimization of harm, the responsibility to provide safe, effective, high quality, care based on evidence based best practice guidelines. For 22 consecutive years, nurses have been considered the most ethical profession by Americans in a Gallup poll. In fact, since nursing was added to the poll in 1999, nurses have ranked the most highly ethical profession every year, except in 2001 when firefighters topped the list.

In 2019, I was asked to begin providing hormone replacement therapies to transgender individuals. To do so, I sought out training and certification through the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH). WPATH is internationally recognized for producing the highest level of standards for transgender medical care. Since 2019, I have obtained over 300 continuing education hours specific to transgender care. Additionally, I completed a mentoring fellowship with a WPATH certified endocrinologist. In 2023, I tested for and became one of the 188 WPATH certified providers in the United States, across all specialties. I am the only certified provider in Kansas. I practice explicitly within the WPATH guidelines for the medical treatment of Gender Incongruence and within the limitations of my Kansas licensure and board certification from the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners. It is my ethical responsibility to provide high quality, competent, well-regulated medical care to my patients and I can assure you that I do not take this responsibility lightly.

The negative social, psychological, and medical consequences of withholding affirming treatment until persons have reached adulthood has been well documented in several

studies. The American Academy of Pediatrics, The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, The American Psychological Association, The Endocrine Society, The Pediatric Endocrine Society, and The World Professional Association for Transgender Health along with many others have affirmed their support for gender affirming care for minors including puberty suppression and gender affirming hormone therapies. For a minor to access gender affirming care, I independently and in collaboration with mental health experts ensure that the minor endorses persistent and insistent gender dysphoria over an extended period. It is my duty to ensure that the minor and their legal guardians fully understand the risks versus the benefits of gender related medical care including the reversible and permanent effects of therapies. I require all legal guardians to be involved in these discussions and legal, informed consent is obtained in writing from minors and their guardians.

Affirming chosen gender is consistently linked to lower rates of suicide attempt. Simply put, allowing transgender individuals access to gender affirming medical care is suicide prevention. I implore you to please give transgender youth the best chance at growing up. Research shows us that greater than 97% of youth who come out as transgender during adolescence will seek medical care and go on to live in their affirmed gender for the remainder of their lives. Unfortunately, in blatant disregard of the research, several states have already passed laws banning gender affirming medical care for transgender youth. For minors that were already involved in care, these laws tore away essential treatments shown to improve mental and physical health leaving parents terrified of the mental health declines sure to follow. Due to their inability to receive care in their home state, minors and their parents are traveling as far as 700 miles away to seek care in Kansas.

In conclusion, today, I'm asking you to think like a nurse. If HB 2791 is enacted, transgender minors from Kansas and other states will be unable to receive healthcare services in Kansas. You can allow these youth and their families the autonomy to determine the medical care that is best for them, rather than putting up barriers to accessing healthcare. You will be practicing beneficence and promoting justice by rejecting this discriminatory bill in favor of ensuring the best interest of families and youth. Nonmaleficence will be seen as you minimize harm by ensuring that Kansas stays the kind and free state that I know it to be.

Thank you,

Amanda Mogoi, MSN, APRN, FNP-C

HB 2791  
Amy Bell  
Kansas NOW  
2/27/2024  
coordinator@ksnow.org  
Written Only  
Opponent

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. My name is Amy Bell and I am the president of the Kansas National Organization for Women. I am writing today to encourage you to vote no on HB 2791.

Kansas NOW strongly believes that all Kansans deserve privacy in the exam room and that the government has no business making healthcare decisions for its citizens. Medical professionals confirm the need for appropriate treatment of children experiencing gender dysphoria and treatment of minors with this condition is known to save lives. This kind of medical intervention by the state sets a dangerous precedent that takes liberty from the people and sets us up for more government overreach into our personal lives.

Please protect our rights to arrange appropriate medical treatment with our doctors.

HB 2791  
Amy Carter  
Private Citizen  
2/27/2014  
Carteam17@yahoo.com  
Written Only  
Opponent

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you for giving me time to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Amy Carter and I am a voter in Johnson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791.

Why does this legislature continue to target our most vulnerable citizens? Gender-affirming care is life-saving care. Medical care for gender dysphoria is evidence-based, medically necessary, and safe—which is why every major medical association advocates against bills like this. Patients, families, and their doctors should have the freedom to make their own private medical decisions—not politicians. Gender-affirming care is individualized to meet the needs of each patient, managed through a careful and evidence-based model of assessment and informed consent—which is already required by law. This bill is written extremely broadly—such that it could have significant additional harmful consequence beyond gender affirming healthcare. Please think about the harm this legislation could do to an already marginalized community.

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of HB 2791. Thank you.

HB 2791  
Amy Hill  
Private Citizen  
2/27/2024  
amykfrost@yahoo.com  
Written Only  
Opponent

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee - thank you for allowing me to submit testimony regarding HB 2791. My name is Amy Hill and I live in Olathe, KS. I encourage you to vote no on HB 2791.

Gender affirming care is crucial to support kids and families who need it. Imagine if your child came to you and needed your support to navigate the path of their gender identity. I think any parent wants to support their child to be the person they want to be, especially if it was causing that child mental anguish to hide part of themselves. You would have questions about the best way to support your child. Most parents don't have the answers to these questions but the care that doctors and mental health specialists can provide for these families is evidence-based, medically necessary, and safe and every major medical association advocates against bills like this.

I have people in my life who are transgender and the decisions they and their families make regarding how they present themselves to the world are not decisions they take lightly. But it is so important to them to be who they are that they are willing to face the backlash from so many others, including people who support bills like these. Patients, families, and their doctors should have the freedom to make their own private medical decisions. Allowing medical and mental health professionals to provide support as kids and families navigate their gender identity gives them the expert guidance they need to make informed and safe decisions. Please don't take that away from them - becoming who you are meant to be in life is hard enough for all kids and teens, don't make it harder by removing life-saving and affirming resources.

Thank you for your consideration. I encourage you to vote no on the passage of HB 2791.  
Amy Hill  
Olathe, KS

HB 2791  
Angela Schweller  
Private Citizen  
2/27/2024  
angela@angelaschweller.com  
Written Only  
Opponent

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you allowing me to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you today. I'm writing to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791

With the recent murder of the young person (Nex Benedict) in Oklahoma who was targeted for being queer, it is imperative that we are listening to and acknowledging our queer youth. Medical care, which includes gender affirming care, is something that should be left to patients, their family, and their medical professionals. Government should not be mandating what medical professionals can and cannot do when treating their patients. This bill is discriminatory towards trans Kansans, and is not the kind of unwelcoming message we want to send to people.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and once again, I encourage you to vote no on the passage of HB 2791. Thank you.



HB 2791  
Angie Powers  
Private Citizen  
2/28/2024  
angierpowers@gmail.com  
Written Only  
Opponent

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, I appreciate you providing an opportunity to share my thoughts on HB 2791. My name is Angie Powers; I am a voter, educator, and mom in Johnson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791.

As a mother to a non-binary adult and veteran educator, the consequences of this bill concern me greatly. I know what it's like to accept my child for who they are, even when I don't totally understand what they are going through. I know what it takes to make every student feel welcomed in my class so they can learn. And I know this bill, if passed, will make parents' and educators' job harder when all we want is to support our children. Let families and medical professionals make medical decisions that work for the children they care for; keep politicians out of these very personal decisions.

Thank you again for considering my perspective as a veteran educator and mother. I encourage you to vote no on HB 2791.

2791

Ann Norbury

Private citizen

2/27/2024

Annknorbury@gmail.com

Written only

Opponent

Chairman Landwehr and members of the Committee, thank you for the time to share my thoughts on HB 2791. My name is Ann Norbury and I'm a voter in Johnson County. I encourage the Committee to vote NO on HB 2791.

I oppose this bill because it would interfere with the freedom of parents to make medical decisions for their family. Medical care is private between doctors and patients. There is no reason to allow discrimination in medical care.

Thank you for considering my thoughts on this bill. I encourage you all to vote NO on the passage of HB 2791.

HB 2791  
Aphra Marie Moon  
PRIVATE CITIZEN  
2/27/2024  
Lacunae@tuta.io  
WRITTEN ONLY  
OPPONENT

My name is Aphra Marie Moon, and I thank the committee for listening to what I have to say about this bill, as it would directly affect me and my community. I am a voter in Wyandotte county, and like you all, I hope, I'm concerned with truth, equity, peace and justice for all.

As a transgender woman, I would be directly affect by this bill, as well as many members of my community. I see n necessity for this bill. You will only be hurting members of your consistency. And I'm sorry to say, this bill, and all the bills like it are a direct violation of my, and women and men like me (proudly trans)-- our human rights. To vote for this bill, is to take an evil action that helps no one and hurts many based on your own prejudices. I will not forgive you. I know you don't care-- but you should still know. Please. Focus on actual policy and stop bullying the people you can get away with bullying. It's textbook fascism lads. Once you all manege to legislate us all out of existence-- will you attack cis women again, or go after the rest of the queers? Maybe both? I could go on-- but then we'd never leave because I could just keep going on... I leave you with Google's old motto "Don't be evil."

Once again, thank you. I thank you all for hearing my thoughts on this bill, and I ask you all to vote no on HB 2791.

HB 2791  
Aricles Roby  
Private Citizen  
2/22/2024  
Roby.consulting.llc@gmail.com  
Written only  
Opponent

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you. My name is Aricles Roby and I am a voter in Shawnee County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791.

As a queer, transgender, and indigenous person who grew up in a very rural and unwelcoming community, I implore you to consider the long-term and far-reaching effects this bill would have if passed. In addition to denying life saving care to transgender and gender non-conforming youth in our state, introduction and especially passage of this kind of legislation brings with it a hate filled rhetoric that extends so far beyond the medical care targeted here.

It reaches so far, in fact, that just this past week, an indigenous transgender child, 16 year old Nex Benedict, was beaten by 3 girls in their high school's bathroom that the child could not walk to the nurses office. School staff refused to help. Nobody called an ambulance for them. Hospital treatment was minimal and they were reportedly released with little care. When the child later died from their injuries, their local community said hateful things and behaved as if a child deserved to die in this brutal manner.

Nex Benedict deserved life-saving medical care. Their injuries had nothing to do with their gender identity. Bans like this bill don't just take away "gender affirming care," it gives discrimination an open door. That open door leads to nothing but neglect, egregious harm, and senseless death.

Yakoke, thank you for listening. I believe we MUST protect our children. All of them. Please vote no on the passage of HB 2791.

HB 2791

Ashley E. Bloom MD

I am giving testimony of behalf of my organizations, East Heights Family Care as a Family Physician.

2/27/2024

dr.ashleybloom@gmail.com

WRITTEN ONLY

OPPONENT

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for reading my thoughts about HB 2791. My name is Dr. Ashley Bloom. I am a voter & Family Physician in Douglas County who cares for Kansans across our state. I encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791 and protect medical freedom for Kansans.

As a Family Doctor, I care for multiple generations of families including children, parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents and their extended communities. I cherish getting to know and respect each of my patients as an individual human being, and working with them to create a safe, evidence based plan for their medical problems.

Gender dysphoria is a medical problem.

Medical treatment for youth with gender dysphoria is safe.

Medical treatment for youth with gender dysphoria has strong medical evidence to guide physicians and patients and families in developing a safe, individualized treatment plan.

Most importantly, medical treatment for youth with gender dysphoria saves lives.

HB2791 uniquely singles out transgender kids, parents, and families from that freedom to seek the safe care that best addresses their children's individual medical needs.

It bans not just me as a physician from providing life saving care to Kansas kids. It bans many professionals from providing care for youth with gender dysphoria.

Thank you again, for reading my testimony. I encourage you to protect Kansans' freedom to choose safe, evidence based, life saving medical care for their kids and themselves. Please vote no on HB2791. Thank you.

HB 2791  
Aslauriam Khaden  
PRIVATE CITIZEN  
2/27/2024  
lggy.helpdesk@gmail.com  
WRITTEN ONLY  
OPPONENT

Chairmen of the Committee, thank you for hearing my thoughts on HB 2791 today. My name is Aslauriam Khaden, and I am a voter in Douglas County. I am urging you to vote NO on HB 2791.

I believe HB 2791 would harm queer people and further exacerbate existing harm and systemic oppression to queer people. I believe that anyone with empathy would oppose HB 2791.

Thank you again for hearing my thoughts and I once again am urging you to Vote NO on the passage of HB 2791. Thank you

HB 2791  
Beth Roselyn  
Private Citizen  
2/27/2024  
beth.roselyn@gmail.com  
WRITTEN ONLY  
OPPONENT

Chair Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Beth Roselyn (they/she) and I am a voter in Douglas County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791.

HB 2791 will cause real harm to children in the state of Kansas. Gender-affirming care is life-saving care for trans people and we have a right to access this care and to be treated with dignity by healthcare professionals. Every major medical association in the US, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, opposes legislation that bans or limits gender affirming healthcare for minors because they recognize that trans youth deserve access to evidence-based, affirming healthcare that can improve their self-esteem, health, and quality of life, and even save their lives.

Gender-affirming care is not one-size-fits-all. Decisions about what care is appropriate for any child are made with that specific child and their needs in mind. Trans kids, their parents, and their doctors, following the science and evidence-based care guidelines, should be the people to make decisions about what care is appropriate for any particular child, not legislators. The state should not intervene in healthcare decisions. The state's function is to promote the well-being of its citizens and help ensure their access to quality healthcare, not discriminate against children for being different.

As a 47-year-old trans nonbinary person, I came of age at a time when gender-affirming care was not easy to access for adults, let alone children. I am so grateful that trans kids today are growing up in a world where gender-affirming healthcare is available to them. We need to keep it that way. It is hard to imagine how my life would have been different if I would have had access to gender-affirming care as a kid. At the very least, I probably would not have developed endometrial cancer because I would have had the chance to take puberty blockers.

Thank you for your time and reading my testimony on this bill. I encourage you to vote no on HB 2791, to vote no on harming children, to vote no on legalizing discrimination and interfering in the healthcare decisions of children and their families. A no vote on HB 2791 is a vote in favor of freedom, equality, and justice. Thank you.

HB 2791  
Blake Bailey  
Private Citizen  
2/26/2024  
blakebailey.ks@gmail.com  
Written Only  
OPPONENT

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee: Thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts and strong feelings of myself and many on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Blake Bailey and I am a life long Kansan and a registered and active voter in Wyandotte County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791.

As a gay man, and someone who is not out of touch to the political narratives and tones of this state and our country, I am here today to testify to the dangers of this legislation and legislation of this kind.

Growing up in this state as a queer person, I have not always felt comfortable being myself, but I am not a unique outlier in the story of LGBTQ+ rights in this state or our country.

Broad legislation like this is an attack on personal and individual freedoms, not only to express ones self, but to live as individuals and as who we are, legislation like this defeats our given right to self determination and to live the life we want to live. I might not be a member of the transgender community, but as a queer person I fear for legislation that could come after this, I fear for discriminatory legislation against the overall LGBTQ+ community, people of color, women, and so forth.

This bill could set a trend of dangerous legislation that is equally severe on a state level and/or on a federal level. If we are stripping the freedoms from transgender peoples', families, and medical professionals to make decisions for themselves, how can anyone truly feel safe that they aren't next?

The Republican Party is expressed as one of individual freedoms and limited government, I encourage the Republican members of this committee to vote NO on this bill if the party is truly still one of individual freedoms, limited government, and self determination.

The facts are simple and clear, gender-affirming care is life-saving care.

Medical care for gender dysphoria is evidence-based, medically necessary, and safe—which is why every major medical associations advocates against bills like this.

Patients, families, and their doctors should have the freedom to make their own private medical decisions—not politicians.



Gender-affirming care is individualized to meet the needs of each patient, managed through a careful and evidence-based model of assessment and informed consent—which is already required by law.

This broad aspects of this bill are alarming. We read things in this bill so broad that it could have significant additional harmful consequence beyond gender affirming healthcare.

The bill does not define what it means to “promote,” “provide,” or “advocate” for social transition or gender affirming medical care—meaning not only will mental and medical health professionals be impacted by this bill, but it could also disrupt school counselors, teachers, daycare providers, etc., who interact with trans youth.

The language of the bill clearly discriminates against transgender Kansans and raises constitutional concerns about state employee’s free speech rights.

This is not the type of legislation that Kansans are concerned about, instead, I encourage this committee to vote this bill down with a simple "No" vote, and let us all move on to finding solutions to real issues Kansans are facing everyday.

Thank you all for hearing my story, and I encourage you all to vote NO on the passage of HB 2791.  
Thank you!

HB2791

Bonnie Anderson

Private citizen

2/27/2024

bonanderson2020@gmail.com

Written only

Opponent

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Bonnie Anderson and I am a voter in Johnson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791. Please help leave these difficult decisions to families and medical professionals and keep big government from interfering.

I have known families that have struggled with these very complex and emotional issues. I do not believe government interference will result in more sound practices, but just the opposite.

Thanks for hearing me out. Please vote no on the passage of HB 2791.

**Brenda Rausch Testimony: SENATE PUBLIC HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE HB 2791 and HB 2792**

As specified in senate guidelines, I am able to attend in person for testimony before the Kansas Senate.

As my elected officials, I request that you vote **against** HB 2791 and HB 2792. I am hopeful that you compassionately consider the needs of all your constituents. I say this as a mom, aunt, friend and ally of the transgender community.

I urge you to have conversations with families of transgender children, then vote against these and future discriminatory bills. We are like you; we want our kids to be safe, happy and healthy. As a parent, our journey wasn't something that I foresaw; but with science-based, sound medical care I see my child showing up in this world authentically, happy, healthy and unashamed of who they are. All children should have this right.

Medical decisions related to gender affirming care should be based on clinical care team guidance, not arbitrary and sweeping bills that are not science-based. Please realize that gender affirming care already has strict medical guidelines and requires input from a team of experts. Introducing and supporting HB 2791 and HB 2792 in no way makes our community safer or provides additional protection for your constituents. Instead, these bills breed fear and make vulnerable children the target of hate and discrimination.

Finally, I urge you to review the following as an independent, impartial resource from the American Academy of Pediatrics. 'The AAP recommends taking a "gender-affirming," nonjudgmental approach that helps children feel safe in a society that too often marginalizes or stigmatizes those seen as different.' Source: <https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/142/4/e20182162/37381/Ensuring-Comprehensive-Care-and-Support-for?autologincheck=redirected>

I thank you for your vote **against** HB 2791 and HB 2792.

Sincerely,

Brenda Rausch

# House Committee on Health and Human Services

## Cover Page

Bill Number: 2791

Support: \_\_\_\_\_ Oppose: X Neutral: \_\_\_\_\_

Testimony will be: Oral In-person: \_\_\_\_\_ Oral WebEx: \_\_\_\_\_ Written Only: X

For Meeting On:

February 29, 2024 at 1:30 PM, Room 112-N

Testimony By:

Brian and Kelsey Wendt

On Behalf Of:

All Kansas children, families, and medical providers, especially for our son

Email Address: brianwendt@outlook.com / krwendt@gmail.com

Telephone Number: (913) 219-4400 / (913) 200-8841

House Committee on Health and Human Services  
February 23, 2024  
House Bill 2791

Brian and Kelsey Wendt  
Testimony of Opposition

Representatives Haswood, McDonald, Oropeza, Vaughn and other Committee members,

We are writing to express our strong opposition to House Bill 2791, the "Forbidding Abusive Child Transitions Act." As parents of a transgender son, this bill deeply concerns us because it would deny essential, life-affirming care to transgender minors, including our child. The ability for transgender youth to access gender-affirming healthcare is not only a matter of personal well-being but a crucial aspect of their mental and physical health. Since beginning his transition, our son has flourished—his smile brighter, his engagement with life richer. He found the courage to return to in-person schooling, thriving academically and artistically, especially in his passion for drawing.

Gender-affirming care is not just medically supported; it's a lifeline for transgender youth like our son, reducing risks of depression and suicide. This bill not only undermines the health and well-being of transgender children but also their dignity and right to thrive. By restricting access to such care, House Bill 2791 would have devastating effects on families like ours, denying children the chance to live fully in their truth.

We urge you to consider the real-world impacts of this legislation on your constituents and their families. We need laws that protect and support all children, allowing them to grow and succeed in every aspect of their lives. Please stand against House Bill 2791 and in solidarity with families who value their children's happiness and health above all.

Sincerely,

Brian and Kelsey Wendt

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Baldwin City, KS 66006  
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HB2791  
Brooklyn Walker  
Private citizen  
2/24/2024  
brooklyn.evann.walker@gmail.com  
Written only  
Opponent

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, Thank you for giving me time to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you. My name is Brooklyn Walker and I am a voter in Reno County. I am writing to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791.

My family has the privilege to know several transgender children. We have watched over the years as those children have struggled, sometimes to the point of attempted suicide, with their gender identity. We have also observed firsthand that gender affirming care has enabled these children to thrive. They are succeeding in school, building community in their churches, and connecting in positive ways with their friends. They have hopes and dreams for the future.

Kansas is losing population, relative to other states. At best, we rank in the middle of the pack in terms of states' level of education. We struggle to attract people, especially people with high levels of human capital, to our state. And Kansas is in around the bottom third of states in terms of GDP growth.

Some of our family friends (with graduate degrees and highly sought-after skills) have left Kansas solely due to the Kansas legislature's attacks on trans kids. All of the families (who again are headed by highly educated parents with valuable skills) I know who have trans children have at least explored leaving Kansas because of the actions of the Kansas legislature.

Building a climate that supports Kansas kids and enables their success is important to building the human capital and retaining the capital that Kansas needs to thrive. Making sure that trans kids have access to what they need to thrive helps all Kansans.

Once again, thank you for hearing my thoughts on this bill. I encourage you to vote no on the passage of HB 2791. Thank you.

HB 2791  
Campbell McNorton  
Private Citizen  
2/29/2024  
campbellmcnorton@gmail.com  
Written Only  
Opponent

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for taking time to read through my testimony and consider my opinion on HB 2791. My name is Campbell McNorton and I am a young voter in Pottawatomie County. I am writing today in opposition to HB 2791 and to urge the committee to vote no.

To begin, I am a young voter in the state of Kansas who loves to live here. I am also a member of the LGBTQ+ community. Growing up here, I have always been proud to be a Kansan, as our state origins promoted a welcoming environment for everyone. However, if HB 2791 were to be implemented, I would have to rethink my future goals of living in Kansas. As the broad language of the bill would allow for discrimination against my present community and potentially, my future children.

As a representative of a state that is losing youth to other states, I would strongly encourage you to think about the implications of telling large groups of people that they are not welcome here. I believe that everyone in Kansas should feel safe to live as who they truly are. Discriminatory bills like this remove a feeling of safety and allow tragedies like the death of Nex Benedict in Oklahoma to happen.

Gender-affirming care is life saving care for trans people, especially young trans people in need of affirmation and love. This medically safe practice allows for young people in the state of Kansas to feel safe in their bodies, homes, and schools. Trans youth that do receive gender-affirming care have better futures as they participate better in school, their community, and their family homes. Without this support, they are at a much higher risk for substance abuse, depression and anxiety, and suicide.

HB 2791 would take away all access for trans youth to feel like themselves and remove parents, families, and doctors from making the best choices for trans youth. Youth are not making the decision to transition alone and this bill removes a choice that should be made privately by families. Alongside this, 98% of young people who start gender-affirming care in adolescence continue as adults. The reason for this is that gender-affirming care is the only evidence-based means of treating transgender youth with gender dysphoria and is supported by medical and mental health professionals. Bans of gender-affirming care are strongly opposed by medical professionals as it threatens the lives of trans youth.

So, HB 2791 would not protect youth from making a regretful decision, as the decision for care is made with professionals and family members. Simply, the choice to make a private life-saving medical decision would be taken away from Kansans.

Thank you again for taking the time to read my testimony, and I urge you to vote no of the passage of HB 2791.



Bill Number: HB 2791

Testimony format: ORAL

Indicate disposition: OPPONENT

Name of Conferee: Cat Poland

Email: [catherine.poland@gmail.com](mailto:catherine.poland@gmail.com)

Private Citizen

Location: Hutchinson

My name is Cat Poland. I am a writer, non-profit board chair, church board member, school volunteer, wife, friend, lifelong Kansan and mom to 3 amazing children.

I'm writing to you today to express my deep concern and fear of governmental interference in my family's medical decision making.

My 14 y/o child has an uncommon and potentially life-threatening health condition that is often grossly misunderstood. In fact, only .6% of the American population suffers from this condition.

He nearly died from complications of this condition in 2021. We almost lost our baby.

I was distraught. I slept on the hardwood floor right outside the bedroom door weeping and praying for God to help ease his suffering. I felt hopeless and helpless--but hope was not lost.

We found out there's treatment available that could reduce our child's risk of dying by 40%. Of course no medical treatment is risk free, but not acting also held potentially dangerous implications.

We did hours upon hours research, consulted with a variety of doctors and healthcare professionals who knew your child well, and also spoke with other people who shared this condition. Ultimately our child decided it was something they wanted to pursue, and as loving, cautious, caregivers, we decided the potential benefits outweighed the risks.

And, it worked! Our child's health began improving, he was able to attend school regularly again, and even started getting straight A's when he previously had failed nearly every class.

Our child was once again able to IMAGINE a future for himself, happier and healthier than we've seen them in a very, very long time.

Now why on earth would the government want to interfere with this type of treatment? Why would it suddenly become illegal for us to seek the medical care he needs, and that's given us our child back?

Because my son is transgender.

Because his condition is gender dysphoria.

And because the treatment is gender affirming medication.

**Abusive**--that's what some Kansas lawmakers are calling parents like me who have been fighting like hell to save our children's lives.

HB 2791 is called the "**Forbidding Abusive Child Transitions Act,**" and that breaks my heart.

I am not a perfect mother. But I certainly am not an abusive one.

I've been asked if I'm worried that the medication will harm his chances of having children some day. I tell them I'm more worried about having a child alive TODAY. Because if he doesn't live until adulthood, there would be no chance for future grandchildren, whether biological or adopted.

See, my son was in such a state of despair after coming out as transgender, so confused and terrified within his body, that he swallowed a handful of pills and prayed he wouldn't wake up. Thank God he did, but it's been a difficult, terrifying journey.

At the end of 2021, he was actively suicidal, had cuts from self harm covering his body, and was anorexic and bulimic, wasting away before our eyes. He spent a week in inpatient care, then another 6 weeks in a psychiatric residential treatment facility. His entire 7th grade year was an educational loss. *(And if the state is concerned about paying for inexpensive hormones, I can assure you that paying for weeks of inpatient psychiatric care costs the state FAR more, probably around \$50,000+.)*

I don't like disclosing these things about my child to strangers, but you are not just any strangers. You hold power over the decisions he's able to make about his own body, his own health. Decisions that have helped him dig out of the deepest, darkest pit imaginable.

And he has. Praise the Lord, he has.

Through intensive therapy, a supporting, loving family, a wonderful church community, AND gender affirming medication, he's thriving.

He's now a freshman in high school. He's getting straight As and loves going to class. He recently earned his learner's permit. He's attending school dances and auditioning for plays and participating in church youth group. He feels much more comfortable in his own body.

He wants to live. My child WANTS to LIVE.

And now, his health, his life, is in your hands. And no offense to you, but it shouldn't be. We, as his parents, should be able to help him make medical decisions that are right for him.

**As Attorney General Kris Kobach recently stated in his letter to the Kansas Association of School Boards, parents have a “right to direct the care, upbringing, and education of their children.”**

Parents should have the right to decide if their child would benefit from gender affirming medication, NOT the government. Yes, there are potentially harmful side effects as with ANY medical treatment, but for our child, and for the vast majority of transgender individuals, the benefits far outweigh the risks.

I appreciate that Kansas lawmakers want to protect the health of Kansas children, but HB 2791 would cause great harm to young transgender Kansans who are already at greater risk of suicide, self harm, family ostracization, dropping out of school, substance abuse, bullying and violence.

I appreciate your time, and ask you to please oppose HB 2791 and give my family a fighting chance to remain in Kansas, and my child a fighting chance to see 15, 16, 17, 18 and every glorious year beyond.

Sincerely,

Cat Poland

HB 2791  
Catherine Hollyer  
Private citizen  
2/27/2024  
cathollyer@gmail.com  
Written only  
Opponent

Thank you for your time today. I am writing to implore you to vote no on HB 2791.

Many children I love and care about identify as trans. This bill would directly impact them at a time in their lives when they need the most encouragement and uplifting. Too many trans youth die by suicide. I can't imagine that the state of Kansas would allow that to happen. Please, vote no.

Thank you again for your consideration. Please help support the kids of this great state—all kids, including trans kids.

Private Citizen  
02-27-24  
chloechaffin27@gmail.com

Chair Landwehr and members of the committee, thank you for taking the time today to read my remarks on HB 2791. I am Chloe Chaffin, a voter and student in Topeka, and I am asking you to please vote no on HB 2791.

Even before passed, the media and signaling power of bills like these is so incredibly powerful and so incredibly harmful. Queer and trans youth see that their elected officials treat the regulation of their bodies as a state priority in ways that their inclusion and mental health are not similarly prioritized and it sends a strong message that they are different and wrong and not welcome here. I do not believe that that is the case.

I care a lot about the reputation of "midwestern nice". I think our communities are broadly kind and supportive places where neighbors want to see each other thrive, but it is a wretched shame that those with the most power amongst us don't see it that way. The message that this continuous debate sends queer kids is that they ought to hurry up and move away just as soon as they have the chance. Unfortunately, many of them will listen and do just that if we continue down this path. Though even then, moving may be the least bad option for some of these kids as their ridicule and societal rejection can be so damaging to their mental health that they take drastic measures such as self-harm or suicide if the violence does not come from the outside first. Failure to intervene in SUPPORT of the victimized and hurting children makes the legislature complicit.

Puberty blockers and social transitioning are reversible, but puberty is not. A lot of the anti-trans rhetoric I see is really graphic language about kids "mutilating" their bodies which is a gross misrepresentation and misunderstanding of what trans kids go through, especially before age 18. If we are really worried about making sure kids understand the medical decisions they are making then we should want to let them buy themselves sometime and create more support and education around the issue instead of shutting down conversation and driving folks back into the shadows. I feel that these "concerns" must be cynical and insincere or else why would the actions of this body not match its stated goals?

Leave private medical decisions up to individuals and their doctors. Everything about this is not just hateful and harmful, but Exhibit A of big government overreach in our communities. How can elected officials with titles behind their names and the power to shape and create law for all decide against social transitions in all circumstances? There is zero harm in letting folks be kind to one another and respect their understanding of self. If anything, there is such a deep literature base telling us that the exact opposite is what does the harm. Let's just agree to trust out neighbors when they tell us who they are. I never thought that was too much to ask. Just kindness, respect, and privacy. That's all.

Again, thank you for your attention. Please vote no on the passage of HB 2791 and all similar bills attacking trans Kansans. These bills are hurtful and unpopular. Thank you.

Private Citizen  
02-27-24  
colleen@demod.com

Chair Landwehr and Committee Members, Thank you for giving me the time and opportunity to share my thoughts on HB2791 with you. My name is Colleen Cunningham, and I am a parent of 3 young children in Overland Park. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on HB2791.

First and foremost, I oppose this legislation for its discrimination against children experiencing gender dysphoria. Medical care for gender dysphoria is evidence-based, medically necessary, and safe—which is why every major medical association advocates against bills like this.

Once again, legislation meddles in medical decisions made by individuals, and appears to do so based on religious beliefs held by some, but not all, Kansans. It is my deeply held belief that medical decisions are between an individual, their chosen medical provider, and anyone else they wish to include. If they wish to include Kansas legislators in this process, they are already free to do so.

My final concern about this bill is the broad language it uses. It is clear to me that the use of undefined terms such as "promote," "provide," and "advocate" are going to leave professionals who work with children unable to do that work without fear of legal repercussions. This is likely to include not just medical professionals, but also teachers, guidance counselors, preschool teachers, and so on.

Again, I appreciate your time and attention to my concerns about this bill, and I encourage you all to vote NO on the passage of HB2791. Thank you.

HB 2791  
Danielle  
Private Citizen  
2/27/2024  
daniellegiarla@gmail.com  
Written Only  
Opponent

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you for giving me the time to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Danielle Giarla and I am a voter in Johnson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791.

Gender affirming care for youth consists of access to mental health care and counseling, puberty blockers and hormone treatments. The suicide rates of transgender youth is at alarming levels. As a parent, I want to do whatever it takes to ensure that my children and their peers grow up in a loving, safe environment. Bills like this harm our children and do not protect them. Let's let parents make these decisions with their doctors and health care providers.

Once again, I thank you all for your time and hearing my thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no on HB 2791. Thank you.



# House Committee on Health and Human Services

## Cover Page

Bill Number: 2791

Support: \_\_\_\_\_ Oppose: X Neutral: \_\_\_\_\_

Testimony will be: Oral In-person: \_\_\_\_\_ Oral WebEx: \_\_\_\_\_ Written Only: X

For Meeting On:

February 29, 2024 at 1:30 PM, Room 112-N

Testimony By:

Danny and Cathy Wendt

On Behalf Of:

All grandparents supporting their grandchildren

Email Address: danny1496home@yahoo.com / cathyfw@yahoo.com

Telephone Number: (785) 979-6341 / (785) 979-6342

House Committee on Health and Human Services  
February 23, 2024  
House Bill 2791

Danny and Cathy Wendt  
Testimony of Opposition

To the House Committee on Health and Human Services,

We write to you as concerned grandparents, in strong opposition to House Bill 2791, known as the "Forbidding Abusive Child Transitions Act." Our beloved grandchild faces a direct threat from this bill, which seeks to deny essential, life-affirming care to transgender minors. This legislation jeopardizes the mental and physical health of transgender youth, denying their dignity and right to live a fulfilling life in their truth.

We have witnessed firsthand the positive impact that gender-affirming healthcare can have on a child's life. It is not merely a medical necessity but a lifeline, significantly reducing the risks of depression and suicide among transgender minors. The bill stands to have devastating consequences for our grandchild and countless families across Kansas, denying children the opportunity to grow into their authentic selves.

In light of this, we pose a heartfelt question: If it were your child or grandchild navigating this deeply personal journey, facing the world's challenges with bravery and honesty, would you stand by as legislation threatens their chance at happiness and health? Could you deny them the medical care that affirms their identity and supports their well-being?

We implore you to consider the real-life implications of this bill on the children and families of your constituents. Our society should be building laws that protect and nurture all children, giving them the freedom to succeed in every aspect of their lives. We urge you to oppose House Bill 2791 and stand with us and other families who place the happiness and health of their children above all else.

With heartfelt concern,

Danny and Cathy Wendt

1496 N 500 Rd  
Baldwin City, KS 66006  
danny1496home@yahoo.com / cathyfw@yahoo.com  
(785) 979-6341 / (785) 979-6342

Private Citizen  
02-27-24  
donnavandillon1011@gmail.com

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on House Bill 2791, despite the cumbersome process required to do so. My name is Donnavan Dillon. I was born and raised in Lawrence, Kansas. I am a Junior at the University of Kansas pursuing a double major in political science and sociology. I am gay and a proud member of the LGBTQ+ community, and I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791.

The first major concern of House Bill 2791 is the fact that is legislating on an issue that doesn't exist and reinforcing false narratives around gender affirming care within the LGBTQ+ community. For the past several years medical professionals within the state, those who are at the forefront of medical care as it pertains to transgender youth, have made it known gender reassignment surgery is not something that occurs on minors within the state. Blocking other forms of gender affirming care such as puberty blockers and HRT will pose a direct threat to the livelihood of children within our state. In HB2792 a bill being heard today that also deals with gender affirming care, mandates the adoption of the Endocrine Society's care guidelines. Upon further examination of the Endocrines Societies platform, although I don't believe center the most comprehensive and widely accepted standards of care, center some of the WIDELY accepted truths around transgender healthcare this bill goes directly against. Some of those can be summed up in quotes pulled directly from their "Transgender Health position statement" published in December of 2020:

- "Despite increased awareness, many barriers to improving the health and well-being of transgender youth and adults remain. Oftentimes, medical treatment for gender dysphoria/ gender incongruence is considered elective by insurance companies, which fail to provide coverage for physician- prescribed treatment." This can have an adverse impact on patient outcomes, particularly in rural and underserved areas."

- "Transgender individuals who have been denied care show an increased likelihood of dying by suicide and engaging in self-harm."

- Transgender/gender incongruent youth who had access to pubertal suppression, a treatment which is fully reversible and prevents development of secondary sex characteristics not in alignment with their gender identity, have lower lifetime odds of suicidal ideation compared to those youth who desired pubertal suppression but did not have access to such treatment."

These are all widely accepted truths that surround gender affirming care, which is more importantly life-saving care, for LGBTQ+ Kansans. This bill directly attacks access to healthcare for some of the very people who need it most. Would lead to decrease in quality of health and wellbeing in transgender and LGBTQ+ Kansans. Lastly it would drastically decrease the standards of quality and impact of our state agencies and the work they seek to do to benefit ALL Kansans regardless of

gender identity. This body has a history of passing incongruent and sloppy policy that has far reaching unintended consequences. I urge the committee here today to break that cycle by voting in opposition to this overreaching, poorly written, and clearly unconstitutional bill.

With all of the pressing issues at hand the legislature should not waste its time creating legislation on issues that do not exist within the state. That is a waste of taxpayer dollars and takes away from the actual issues that face our state. Kansas voters and taxpayers put you in this building to create legislation that addresses real issues such as the rising cost of living, the environmental issues facing our farmers and water supply, and ensuring our schools and communities thrive. This needs to be the focus of your time and energy not reintroducing legislation that has failed year after year and had tremendous opposition from experts to everyday Kansans.

The second major area of concern is the implications this bill would have in regards to social aspects of transitioning which include things such as recognizing a persons pronouns, preferred name, and identity. To not acknowledge the personhood of another individual is one of the worst atrocities that can occur in society. This dehumanization of people based on their identity has resulted in some of the worst atrocities in human history and is what you are contributing to if you support this bill. This bill in its subsections that implicate state agencies, employees, and organization and persons that state funding touches would effectively ask them to participate in the dehumanization of trans and LGBTQ+ Kansans. This is one of the most cruel and inhuman examples of abuse of legislative power and a course of action the legislature should not engage in. This is not a body of trained medical professionals nor is it a body that has the education or knowledge to tell state agencies how to run themselves in day to day practices.

Once again, I urge you all to show basic humanity and vote no on the passage of HB 2791.

HB 2791  
Dr. Briana McGeough  
Private Citizen  
2/26/2024  
briana.mcgeough@ku.edu  
Written Only  
Opponent

My name is Dr. Briana McGeough, and I am an Assistant Professor in the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare and the co-founder/director of the Center for LGBTQ+ Research and Advocacy. My testimony is offered in my personal capacity as an expert in the field of LGBTQ mental health and informed by my years of research and mental health practice in this field, not as a representative of the University of Kansas. My research focuses on understanding mental health challenges experienced by LGBTQ individuals, including transgender youth, and identifying strategies to promote the mental health and well-being of LGBTQ individuals.

I am testifying today because I strongly oppose HB 2791, and I am concerned about the impact that this policy could have on the mental health of transgender youth. Although I oppose this bill for many reasons, today I will focus on the body of research that shows the direct harm that this bill will have on the mental health of transgender youth and their ability to access essential healthcare.

A robust body of research, employing a variety of research methodologies, has found that having access to gender-affirming care has been linked to better mental health outcomes for transgender youth. These benefits include reductions in suicidality, depression, and gender dysphoria.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, youth who have had access to gender-affirming care earlier in life experience better mental health than youth who accessed care later in life,<sup>2</sup> suggesting the importance of opposing efforts to obstruct transgender youth's access to gender-affirming care. In sum, access to gender-affirming care is a critical aspect of promoting the mental health of transgender youth.

Social transition is often a critical aspect of gender-affirming mental healthcare for transgender youth, which has also been linked to improvements in mental health, including depression and anxiety.<sup>3</sup> This bill would create barriers to mental health service providers engaging in even basic informational conversations with their clients about social transitioning. Because, tragically, disclosure of a transgender identity to caregivers can be met with violence, requiring mental health providers to gain informed consent from youth's parents before discussing any aspect of social transitioning, potentially increases transgender youth's risk for experiencing familial rejection, including physical and emotional abuse.<sup>4</sup>

Lastly, bills like this have an impact beyond their explicit aims. Firstly, policies such as this one that restrict access to gender-affirming care by threatening sanctions against healthcare providers have been found to have chilling effects whereby healthcare providers become less willing to provide legal, necessary, evidence-based procedures, out of fear of penalties and threats of violence.<sup>5</sup> Secondly, this bill is discriminatory as it denies essential, life-saving healthcare to transgender people on the basis of their membership to a vulnerable population. Such discriminatory legislation serves to perpetuate stigma against transgender people. Research has shown that living in a state with more laws that discriminate against transgender people is associated with greater levels of

psychological distress and suicidality among members of the transgender community.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, research conducted in Kansas shows that even merely proposing discriminatory policies, such as this one, harms transgender youth by exposing them to the message that they do not deserve equitable access to essential community support and resources.<sup>7</sup>

1 Lee, J. Y., & Rosenthal, S. M. (2023). Gender-affirming care of transgender and gender-diverse youth: Current concepts. *Annual Review of Medicine*, 74, 107-116.

2 Sorbara, J. C., Chiniara, L. N., Thompson, S., & Palmert, M. R. (2020). Mental health and timing of gender-affirming care. *Pediatrics*, 146(4).

3 Olson, K. R., Durwood, L., DeMeules, M., & McLaughlin, K. A. (2016). Mental health of transgender children who are supported in their identities. *Pediatrics*, 137(3).

4 Thoma, B. C., Rezeppa, T. L., Choukas-Bradley, S., Salk, R. H., & Marshal, M. P. (2021). Disparities in childhood abuse between transgender and cisgender adolescents. *Pediatrics*, 148(2).

5 Hughes, L. D., Kidd, K. M., Gamarel, K. E., Operario, D., & Dowshen, N. (2021). "These laws will be devastating": Provider perspectives on legislation banning gender-affirming care for transgender adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 69(6), 976-982.

6 Price, M. A., Hollinsaid, N. L., McKetta, S., Mellen, E. J., & Rakhilin, M. (2023). Structural transphobia is associated with psychological distress and suicidality in a large national sample of transgender adults. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, 1-10.

7 Pacey, M. S., Sattler, P., Goffnett, J., & Jen, S. (2020). "It feels like home": Transgender youth in the Midwest and conceptualizations of community climate. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 48(6), 1863-1881.

In sum, this bill aims to reduce transgender youth's access to potentially life-saving healthcare that has been linked to improved mental health outcomes. It restricts mental health service providers' ability to provide support around social transitions in ways that potentially increase transgender youth's risk for rejection and abuse from their caregivers. Lastly, bills such as this serve to stigmatize transgender people, and such stigmatization has been linked to adverse mental health effects. As a researcher and mental health service provider committed to the mental health of transgender youth, I urge you to vote against this bill. Thank you for your consideration!

TESTIMONY OF Daniel Murphy, MD  
IN OPPOSITION TO HOUSE BILL 2791

Members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services:

I am Daniel Murphy, MD, a retired Family Physician from Shawnee. I am writing to explain my opposition to House Bill 2792.

My medical practice included individuals of all ages dealing with gender dysphoria or gender incongruence (GD/GI). I conducted initial evaluations, provided advice and counseling, and managed their medical issues, excluding hormone therapy. However, I have studied treatment principles for GD/GI in children and adolescents.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and the Endocrine Society have issued clear guidelines for diagnosing and treating GD/GI at all ages. Here are a few relevant highlights:

- Gender Affirming Care requires involvement from specially trained mental health providers and GD/GI medical specialists.
- Patients must meet specific criteria for the diagnosis of GD/GI, including a 2-year history of transsexual identity. GD/GI is NOT classified as a mental disorder.
- Children should only receive supportive mental and social health care before puberty. Puberty normally begins in girls aged 8 to 13 and boys aged 9 to 14.
- Children should receive treatment to delay pubertal changes when they start puberty (as medically defined). Treatment is usually reversible.
- Hormone therapy should start when the child is capable of informed consent – generally about age 16.
- Gender affirming surgery is reserved for adults who have done well with hormone therapy.

Delaying puberty has been proven to reduce suicide risk and to improve self-image at all ages. Failure to treat at puberty complicates later treatment and causes irreversible body changes that can lead to worsening mental health status in adulthood.

Most of my GD/GI patients and their parents recognized the condition before the age of ten – many as young as five or six. Children tend to choose friends from their identified gender and choose clothing, toys, and activities usually associated with that gender.

Parents think long and hard before requesting evaluation for their children. Surely, any parental bill of rights should include the right to choose such fundamental treatment for their children.

Thank you for allowing me to explain my opposition to this bill.

Please oppose passage of House Bill 2791.



## WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION OF HB 2791

February 29, 2024

Chair Landwehr and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

The Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (KAAP) represents more than 400 pediatricians and pediatric residents practicing in the state. KAAP has the fundamental goal that all children and adolescents in Kansas will grow safe and strong. It is with this goal in mind that oppose HB 2791.

The KAAP recommends that transgender and gender-diverse youth (TGD) have access to comprehensive, gender-affirming, and developmentally appropriate health care provided in a safe and inclusive clinical space. This healthcare is inclusive of family-based therapy and support that recognizes the importance of an individualized approach that best suits the needs of each patient.

Evidence-based standards on gender-affirming care have existed for decades. They require medical professionals to carefully evaluate each patient and make individualized decisions in the patient's best interest. The nation's leading health organizations support gender-affirming care -- including but not limited to the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Association, American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists, Endocrine Society, and the Pediatric Endocrine Society. These organizations support the evidence-based, scientific provision of appropriate medical care for gender-diverse and transgender youth.

Realizing the complexity involved in medical decision-making, a one size fits all approach is detrimental to a physician's ability to make the proper medical decisions for each patient in conjunction with their families. Laws that specifically dictate or limit what physicians discuss during health care encounters undermine the patient-physician relationship. Also, legislative mandates regarding the practice of medicine do not allow for an infinite array of exceptions or cases in which the mandate may be unnecessary, inappropriate, or even harmful to an individual patient.

Any discrimination based on gender identity or expression, real or perceived, is damaging to the socioemotional health of children, families, and society. Even if we don't understand an individual's life journey, we owe it to our children to provide opportunities to feel like they belong.

This legislation would negatively impact and discriminate against both transgender youth in Kansas and thus we stand in opposition to HB 2791. We welcome any questions you might have and are happy to serve as your resource on all pediatric issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Dena Hubbard, MD, FAAP  
Chair, Public Policy Committee  
Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics



To whom it may concern,

My name is Dr. Quinn Jackson. I am a family physician in Kansas City, Kansas. I am writing urging you to vote no on HB2791. This bill is too extreme for Kansas and as a physician, I know it is not based in the reality of the health care needs of transgender youth in our state and across the country. Research shows that the evidence-based life saving care this bill restricts is vitally important to transgender youth. I do not provide hormone care to transgender youth, but I see many for their primary well child care. I cannot describe to you how painful it is to see children in crisis and not be able to give them medical treatments we know will help. This bill is an extreme overreach into the rights of parents to decide what is best for their children. These decisions should be left up to families and their medical providers. Interfering with that relationship is too extreme for Kansas. Patients and their families should be able to decide what they need, not politicians who have never met them.

Please vote no on HB2791.

Thank you,  
Dr. Quinn Jackson

LOUD AND LIGHT

02-27-24

Epleitez071602@icloud.com

I want to Thank the Members of the committee for giving me time to share my lived experiences that will support my opposition of the HB 2791 bill. My name is Edwin Pleitez and I am voter in Jackson County. I am writing writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791.

I am compelled to speak against the injustices that this government continues to impose on trans bodies. As Trans nonbinary person myself I have experienced the life saving treatment of hormone replacement therapy. I began My testosterone clockers as soon as I was safe enough to do so. I mention safety only to draw attention to how detrimental it is for legislation to consider these harmful bills for trans kids who simply want to co exist with other kids authentically. Unfortunately our government continues to marginalize these already oppressed groups of kids. Which consequently promotes even more indiscriminate violence that trans kids already face in society for simply existing. Medical research has unequivocally shown that affirming transgender identities is not only essential but life saving. Countless studies demonstrate the efficacy of gender affirming care. Including HRT and other gender affirming remedies that alleviate gender dysphoria. Mental health has been proven to exponentially increase upon the commencement of hrt. Denying access to these crucial medical interventions not only perpetuates unnecessary suffering but can also lead to devastating consequences such as increased rates of depression( which trans children feel very on in some cases), anxiety and suicide. Basic human rights are at stake here. Transgender individuals deserve to be treated with dignity, respect, and equality under the law.

Thank you for hearing my story on this bill. I encourage you all to be on the right side of history. lastly I must add Nex a non binary child who was killed here in the states due to LGBTQIA+ violence deserved better. Trans kids deserve to be happy and grow old. I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of HB 2791.

Committee on Health and Human Services  
February 29, 2024  
House Bill 2791

Elise Flatland  
Testimony in Opposition

Chairman Landwehr and members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing me, Elise Flatland, a mother of four (two of which are currently receiving gender affirming care) to offer testimony in opposition of HB 2791, which would directly interfere with a doctor's ability to treat a transgender child.

Doctors should follow the current medical guidelines that are made by medical professionals. The guidelines of both the AAP (American Academy of Pediatrics) and AMA (American Medical Association) for treating gender dysphoria is to give puberty blockers and cross hormones. The state government should have no authority in how medical professionals treat medical conditions. Gender dysphoria is a very real medical condition with widely accepted medical treatments that do not need to be scrutinized by the state government that is not made entirely of medical experts.

Some aspects of gender affirming care are non reversible and that is why these choices are made between medical professionals and parents. As a parent I make choices everyday that will affect my child's future, that is my job as a mother. No state government should be able to prevent me from doing what a doctor and I know is best for my children.

Gender affirming care has greatly improved my children's quality of life. I would go as far as to say it might have saved their lives. Gender dysphoria can greatly impact mental health. My children's doctors, counselors, teachers, and school administration are amazed with the difference gender affirming care has had on all aspects of my children's health and mental health.

I oppose HB 2791 and ask that the committee vote against this bill. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Elise Flatland

HB 2791  
Elizabeth Wine, LCSW  
Private citizen  
2/26/2024  
lizwine@gmail.com  
Written only  
Opponent

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on HB 2792 with you today. My name is Elizabeth Wine and I am a voter in Sedgwick County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2792.

I am a Licensed Specialist Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) in the Wichita area. I finished my Masters in Social Work in 2007 from Wichita State University, and then several years later after more clinical experience and supervision, was able to pass a national exam to get my clinical license. The majority of my clinical caseload currently identifies as LGBTQ+ with a number of those clients being transgender teenagers and adults.

To obtain a diagnosis of Gender Dysphoria, there has to be at least a 6 month onset in which the symptoms are consistently present. This is not a diagnosis I give without proper assessment. Once diagnosed, this opens the door to gender-affirming medical care. I have been trained to diagnose clients and seek ongoing clinical training.

I believe that trans rights are a pro-life issue. In 2023, the Trevor Project identified that “41% of LGBTQ young people seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year—and young people who are transgender, nonbinary, and/or people of color reported higher rates than their peers.” They also reported that, “transgender and nonbinary young people who reported that all of the people they live with respect their pronouns reported lower rates of attempting suicide.” In a state where so many spend time, money and energy fighting for the lives of unborn children, we are struggling to take care of the lives of those that are present. A transgender teenager was a baby once.

Transgender persons just want to live their lives and have freedom and equal rights like all Americans.

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of HB 2792. Thank you.

HB 2791  
Ephren Taylor III  
PRIVATE CITIZEN  
2/27/2024  
ephrenwtaylor@gmail.com  
WRITTEN ONLY  
OPPONENT

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Ephren Taylor III and I am a voter in Johnson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791.

I am opposing this bill today because I hold the same values as you all do. The people of this committee and the people of Kansas value Medical and Parental freedom. I appreciate you doing what you think is best to protect those freedoms. I'm sure you can remember many times where Medical and Parental freedom was on the table, and you stood strong to protect it. I am confident that if any bill came your way that violated those fundamental principles of Medical and Parental Freedom that I can count on you to vote against it.

Medical freedom is also something that I hold very dearly to my heart. Just in general it's a blessing to be able to go to any doctor I want and get whatever care me and my doctor have determined necessary.

For example, not every therapist has been the right fit for me and not every method of therapy has been the right fit for me. But I still had the option of figuring that out with me and my therapist and my parents. If my mother and I were not allowed to make those decisions I can say for a fact that I would not be standing before you today. I can't imagine if the state came down on something like Cognitive Behavioral therapy. That's Big government. That is medical authoritarianism not medical freedom. This is the type of world that they are trying to build. One where big government tells us what care we need. One where big government tells us what doctors we can see. That's not a world that I want to live in, and I know that you don't want to live in that world either. Having this freedom is what it means to be Kansan, it's what it means to be an American.

I believe firmly that most of the people of this committee believe in principle of medical freedom as well as the rights of parents to help their child in the best way they know how. It's honorable that you fight so hard to protect those freedoms every day for the people of this state. And that's why I think this bill should concern all of us.

It's very simple.

If a bill violates the principal of medical freedom and/or parental freedom the committee should vote against it

Bill HB 2791 violates the principles of medical freedom and parental freedom.

Therefore, this committee should vote against Bill HB 2791

I thank you all for hearing my thoughts on this bill and for all of the amazing work that you're doing for Kansas. I know that you all are people that stick to your values even when the pressure is high. I trust that you will vote no of the passage of HB 2791.



**Written Opposition Testimony on HB 2791**  
**House Committee on Health and Human Services**  
**February 29, 2024**

Chairwoman Landwehr and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in opposition to HB 2791, which would ban gender-affirming care for transgender youth by prohibiting organizations receiving state funds from recommending gender-affirming care and penalizing healthcare professionals for providing such care. The Kansas Public Health Association (KPHA) is a professional organization that represents more than 800 public health practitioners, healthcare providers, researchers, advocates, and other professionals working together to build a healthier Kansas.

Gender-affirming care is safe, effective, medically necessary treatment for transgender youth that includes a continuum of social, psychological, behavioral, and medical interventions. The most common interventions – social transition, puberty blockers, and hormone replacement therapy – are completely safe and reversible. Gender-affirming care is supported by all of the nation’s leading medical associations, including but not limited to the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Psychiatric Association, and the Endocrine Society. Transgender youth experience disproportionately high rates of depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation, and access to gender-affirming healthcare can be life-saving.

Furthermore, the decision to seek gender-affirming care is complex and deeply personal to each individual. These decisions should be made by the patient, their parents, mental health professionals, and medical care providers. HB 2791 mandates a one-size-fits-all approach to healthcare, creating a significant conflict between medical providers’ adherence to the law and adherence to their professional code of ethics. The proposed legislation impedes physicians’ ability to provide competent healthcare, undermines patient-physician relationships, and denies patients’ medical autonomy.

KPHA supports every Kansan’s right to access the life-saving, affirming healthcare that they need to thrive without government interference. We strongly encourage the Committee to vote NO on HB 2791. Respectfully submitted,

Erin Attebery  
Policy Chair, Kansas Public Health Association  
[erin.attebery@live.com](mailto:erin.attebery@live.com)

HB 2791  
Erin Joy Keith-Chancy  
PRIVATE CITIZEN  
2/22/2024  
kthchncye@gmail.com  
WRITTEN  
OPPONENT

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Erin Keith-Chancy. I am a voter in Douglas County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791.

I was born in KS, became a pediatric/neonatal nurse and traveled across the US before I chose to return to Kansas to raise my family. I have practiced clinically as a pediatric/neonatal nurse for over 25 years. I teach at one of the most respected nursing schools in the state. I am also the mother of three children, the two youngest both identify as LGBTQ. Each one came to us by the age of 12 and explained how they felt inside. I am a Christian and I thank God every day that I had seen the signs along the way and wrestled with the religious teachings and faith-based biases I held. I could look at them, their eyes full of questioning and a little fear, and show them acceptance, the same love as always, and joy in celebration of their courage.

But, since then, their questions are getting harder and harder to answer. "Mom, do you think I will be able to have children someday or will it be illegal then?" or "Do you think I will still be able to get married when I am grown?" or "Mom, where do you think I might be able to go to college without ending up like Matthew Shepard?"

The questions are also hitting closer to home, after KS legislatures passage of the Women's Bill of Rights last year. You see, some people glance at my child and see a male and others see a female. It was this way long before any one in our family was talking about LGBTQ issues. "What happens if I use the "wrong one," mom? Someone will always think I am in the wrong one. Will they take me to jail?" or "Mom, which restroom should I use if they take the unisex one away at school next year? or "I guess I just can't play sports, no one wants me on their team anyway." or "Mom, do you think Grandma would have loved me even though I am trans?"

My trans kiddo is in the 6th grade. They feel absolutely unable to be themselves, always worrying and always listening. They are aware of every news story, no matter how hard I try to filter. They get sad at night. They get emotional in affirming spaces, so moved by feeling accepted. They have a counselor and quality medical care, for now. Tonight, I am afraid that they will see or hear the news about Nex Benedict, non-binary teen in Oklahoma who died after a bathroom fight.

The details won't matter, because Oklahoma has been really noisy lately ---a righteous grandstanding superintendent, school board meetings about firing a teacher and a principal for drag performance. Creating all kinds of moral and religious fervor and national news...and fear. So, when a kid like Nex Benedict dies ---it does not feel like an isolated incident. To my trans kid ---it means that being trans may cost them their lives. And even worse, that the "helpers" the community leaders that are supposed to be "safe" such as pastors, teacher, and community leaders not only do not care, but believe trans people deserve to die, that they are sinful and should not exist. The calls to the crisis line for LGBTQ kids in Oklahoma increased by 500% this week. You see, when a kid hears their leaders say that the care that allows them to relax in their own skin to "survive" is wrong



and should not be allowed---they hear those leaders say they, themselves, should not be allowed. You cannot explain it away, they know being trans is real because it is their lived experience.

The statistics about self-harm and suicide among trans youth are staggering. According to the Trevor Project's 2023 Annual Survey of thousands of youth across the US, 41% of LGBTQ young people seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year including half of transgender and nonbinary young people and nearly 3 in 10 cisgender young people. Nearly 1 in 3 LGBTQ young people said their mental health was poor most of the time or always due to anti-LGBTQ policies and legislation. Nearly 2 in 3 LGBTQ young people said that hearing about potential state or local laws banning people from discussing LGBTQ people at school made their mental health a lot worse

As a mother, I encourage you to veto this bill because it could hurt my child. As doctoral-prepared pediatric nurse, I urge you to veto laws restricting gender-affirming care. I also urge you to read the medical literature. Meet with pediatricians and counselors, get the facts. Patients, families, and their doctors should have the freedom to make their own private medical decisions—not politicians. Gender-affirming care is life-saving care. Medical care for gender dysphoria is evidence-based, medically necessary, and safe—which is why every major medical association advocates against bills like this. Our state and our country have many challenges ahead. Please quit wasting your valuable time, our valuable time, on bills like this. There is real work to do. Once again, I thank you all for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of HB 2791. Thank you.

HB 2791  
ERIN WOODS  
PRIVATE CITIZEN  
2/27/2023  
ewoods999@gmail.com  
WRITTEN ONLY  
OPPONENT

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my opposition to HB 2791. I am a mother of two children. Neither of my children are transgender, but as a mother I can recognize that this bill is not in the best interest of children or their parents. In fact, although the sponsors of this bill may think they are protecting children, in truth they are causing untold harm.

I have a number of friends with children who have faced scary situations with their health such as pediatric cancer, diabetes, anxiety, and depression. In every one of those cases, my friends have relied upon medical professionals to guide them through the best medical and mental health treatment for their children to ensure they could go on to live happy and fulfilling lives.

They trusted that their doctors were following the most up-to-date, evidence-based, well researched healthcare treatment guidelines for their child's diagnosis. I shudder to think how any of these children would be doing today if they were prevented from receiving the healthcare treatments supported and approved by our major medical associations.

Gender-affirming care is one of those healthcare treatments supported by every major medical association, including the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry.

Gender-affirming care is life-saving care. A study published by the American Academy of Pediatrics revealed alarming levels of attempted suicide among transgender youth.

Before you even consider passing this law, I ask that you take the time to meet with some parents of transgender children and gain an informed understanding of the impact this will have on their mental health and well-being.

Please recognize where your limitations as a legislator are as compared to trained medical professionals. Do not take gender-affirming care, that it is often quite literally life-saving care, away from children and the parents who love and care for them.

I appreciate your time and consideration in reading my testimony and I ask that you vote NO on HB 2791.

myself  
02-27-24  
sunnyluvr60@gmail.com

Hello and thank you for giving me the time to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you all. My name is Evelyn Snodgrass and I am a voter in Ellis County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791.

I am an adult transwoman living in a rural Kansas town. I also worked in a high school for almost six months. During my time there, I met a lot of queer youth who would be hurt by the passing of these bills. This bill not only restricts their access to gender-affirming care that they may need to live a happy life or survive through their childhood. It also restricts them from socially transitioning, which will be detrimental to their mental health and physical health as well. When you take away their rights you make it extremely hard for them to go on living. When I worked with those queer youth (mainly trans kids) all they want is to be accepted and be affirmed in their identity. They just want to live. When I was a kid, I wanted to die so desperately because I felt like I would never be who I am. Trans kids deserve the chance to figure that out for themselves and not feel like I did. I don't want to see another trans kid die. I think of all the trans kids I worked with and all I can think of is I don't want to see them die. I urge you to vote against this cruel bill and know that lives are at stake.

Once again, I thank you for your time and letting me share my thoughts on this bill, and I beg you all to vote no of the passage of HB 2791. Thank you.

HB 2791  
Fred Bellemere  
Private Citizen  
2/25/2024  
fbellemere@gmail.com  
Written only  
Opponent

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts on HB 2791. I am writing to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791.

I am the parent of a transgender adult who did begin transitioning as a minor. Having doctors to discuss treatment options with is a must. I feel like many of our Legislators want us to believe treatment of transgender minors is done by unscrupulous people in a circus tent. This could not be further from the truth. The doctors care, they are on the staff of some of the best hospitals in the area. We were told early on that surgery is not an option for a minor. We were given the pro's and con's of hormone treatment for a minor. Then just as it should be, without government intervention, my wife, myself, our daughter, and our doctors made a decision on how to proceed. Your bill as vaguely as it is worded could lead to a parent not being able to even speak with a doctor about a child who thinks they might be transgender. As a parent going through this there could be no nightmare worse than not having anyone to help you know what to do for your child. Our daughter is only one of many transgender minors who received hormone treatment who are out there in the world having a positive impact on society. Somehow, many in Topeka are not willing to acknowledge the existence of transgender people who are happy and productive members of our state and this is unconscionable.

Thank you again for your time. I encourage you all to vote no on HB 2791.

HB2791  
G. Will Rapp  
Private Citizen  
2/27/2024  
rappg@me.com  
Written Only  
Opponent

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Will Rapp. I am a voter in Sedgwick County and the parent of a transgender teen. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791.

From the time I was young growing up in rural Illinois before moving to Kanas in 1993, I was a republican by birth and watched as republicans in all levels of government preached smaller government, less waste and limited government overreach. And here we are in 2024, not the first year bills like HB 2791 have been proposed and passed, with yet another bill written as though the KS legislature knows better than doctors and parents on how to best provide medical care. I ask you, how do you believe that you know what is best for my child and our families healthcare. Our doctors have sworn a Hippocratic oath to do no harm and all decisions are made with much discussion and consideration by those personally involved - myself, my child's mother, and our doctor. With all due respect, the government, especially those who have not been in our position, should not involve themselves in such a broad, general sweeping way as to pass a law using general terms that are not clearly defined turning competent medical professionals into criminals. Think about the long-term negative effects on our youth, our medical system and our ability to retain good doctors in the state if you make it impossible for them to help ALL Kansans. Medical professionals have a choice as to who they wish to take on as patients and we should have a choice to provide the life-saving, gender-affirming care that we wish for our family. The country was built on the concept of freedom that the republican party has supported for decades. Please respect our freedom of choice to get the healthcare we feel best for our child.

Thank you all for reading my story and thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of HB 2791. Thank you.

Testimony to the House Committee on Health and Human Services  
Opponent of HB2791 and HB2792  
Written only

Chairwoman Landwehr and Committee members,

My name is Gretchen Meyer and I am writing in partnership with the Kansas Interfaith Action. KIFA is a statewide, multifaith issue advocacy organization that partners with several Christian denominations, as well as Jewish and Muslim Kansans.

I believe we should protect the rights of the LGBTQ+ community here in Kansas.

As a Christian, I believe that children are some of the most precious gifts that God gives us. I also believe that all children are beloved by God and that, as adults, we have a responsibility to safeguard and help the children in our lives. HB2791 and HB2792 reject the idea that all children are created and loved equally by God by creating a clear hierarchy in which certain children matter and are entitled to medical care, and other children are intentionally denied access to that same care. As a Christian, I cannot accept this. The Bible does not say, "God is love, unless you are transgender or non-binary". It says, "God is love". As a native Kansan, the fact that people in my state are using God's name to justify discrimination and oppression makes me angry. It makes me question whether or not it is safe for me to have children in Kansas. No parent should have to spend their life trying to protect their child from the state legislature. No child should have to grow up knowing that their own elected representatives are actively trying to harm them. If this bill passes, it will do immense damage to individuals within the state and to the state itself. I do not want Kansas to become a state that people flee. I love this state. I grew up here, my family and friends are here, my life is here and I do not want to leave. But if this bill passes, and I have children, I will leave. I cannot raise my children in a state that so relentlessly seeks to harm children.

My church, Plymouth Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, supports the LGBTQ+ community because they are God's beloved children. Our church has issued the following statement, "Plymouth Congregational Church affirms that members of the transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming community share with all others the worth associated with being unique individuals created by God. Considering the struggles they currently face, we especially welcome and affirm the transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming youth community. This congregation joyfully and unequivocally welcomes the transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming community to share in the life, leadership, and blessings of participation in our community of faith. We also commit ourselves to the work of creating not only a world in which transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people are safe but also a world in which they thrive."

Sincerely,  
Gretchen Meyer  
Kansas Resident

Private Citizen  
02-27-24  
hayleyspellman@hotmail.com

Thank you to Chairman Landwehr and the Members of the Committee for allowing me to share my thoughts on HB 2791. My name is Hayley Spellman, and I write to you today as a former teacher and current substitute teacher in Johnson County. I write to the committee to strongly urge a no vote on HB 2791.

As an educator, I have seen firsthand the impact gender-affirming care and treatment have on our trans youth. I have taught countless students who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community, including several who identify as transgender. It takes courage to stand up for what you believe in, and it takes courage to present yourself and match how you truly feel inside.

This issue is literally a matter of life or death, as trans individuals, especially trans women, are statistically more likely to experience LGBTQ+-targeted violence and are at a higher risk of suicide and self harm. Those students' lives matter, as do all members of the queer community.

Gender-affirming care is life-saving care, and these decisions should belong to patients, their families, and doctors. Politicians have no right blocking essential and evidence-based healthcare for transgender individuals. The language of HB 2791 is also especially broad, leaving me with significant concerns regarding its implementation and how it affects educators/administrators, as the broad language likely impacts teachers' ability to teach, school counselors' ability to support students' mental and physical well-being, and administrators' ability to lead an educational environment that allows all students and staff to thrive in a safe and inclusive space.

Thank you for valuing the voices of our educators and hearing my story today. I strongly encourage you to vote no on HB 2791. Thank you.

HB 2791  
Holly Terrill  
PRIVATE CITIZEN  
2/26/2024  
holly.terrill@gmail.com  
WRITTEN ONLY  
OPPONENT

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Holly Terrill and I am a voter in Sedgwick County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791.

As a parent of a transgender child, I am deeply concerned about the potential consequences of this bill, which would severely restrict access to life-saving gender-affirming healthcare and undermine the autonomy of patients, families, and healthcare providers.

HB 2791 effectively bans all gender-affirming healthcare for minors, including vital medical treatments such as puberty blockers, hormone replacement therapy, and surgeries. By prohibiting state funds, including Medicaid, from being used for gender-affirming care, this bill denies essential healthcare services to some of the most vulnerable members of our community. Additionally, it prohibits state agencies and employees from affirming transgender children and mandates improper fear-based informed consent processes, creating unnecessary barriers to care.

It is crucial to recognize that gender-affirming care is not only evidence-based and medically necessary but also life-saving. Every major medical association advocates against bills like HB 2791 because they understand the critical importance of affirming transgender individuals' identities and providing them with appropriate healthcare services. This bill not only interferes with private medical decisions but also discriminates against transgender Kansans and raise serious constitutional concerns regarding free speech rights.

I implore you to stand on the right side of history and oppose HB 2791. Transgender youth deserve our support, affirmation, and access to the healthcare they need to thrive. Please prioritize the well-being and rights of all Kansans by rejecting these harmful and discriminatory bills.

Thank you for considering my perspective, and I urge you to take action to protect transgender children in our state. I encourage you all to vote NO for the passage of HB 2791. Thank you.



# **Oral Testimony in Opposition To HB 2791 (In Person)**

**Iridescent Riffel, Transgender Lifelong Kansan, Lawrence KS, Equality Kansas  
February 22nd, 2024**

**I urge the Committee on Health and Human Services to vote against HB 2791. I urge committee members to listen to medical professionals and queer/transgender resource organizations. There is a lot of misinformation that has been shared with the legislature historically. Below are a few studies and statements of support from many trusted major medical organizations. What I have shared in this document is a fraction of resources and studies available that speak to the safety and necessity of gender affirming care. Before pushing legislation that will negatively impact transgender youth and their families it is imperative that this committee review the science and listen to experts in this field-not out of state hate groups. Before I begin sharing the resources below I do have a couple of constitutional questions that I believe this committee needs to highly consider:**

The first question I have is this. What if a child moves to Kansas from out of state, already socially transitioned, including an amended birth certificate from their birth state, will the state of Kansas recognize them as they identify or will the state of Kansas violate the US Constitution Article IV, Section 1 which requires each state to give full faith and credit to what other states have done?

The US Constitution Article IV, Section 1 reads "Full Faith and Credit shall be given in each State to the public Acts, Records, and judicial proceedings of every other State. And the Congress may by general laws prescribe the manner in which such Acts, Records, and Proceedings shall be proved, and the Effect thereof".

An additional consideration- should the bill be amended to follow the US Constitution and carve out exceptions for people coming from out of state: That would make the state of Kansas liable to be sued under the 14th Amendment regarding equal protection under the law.

The question is- does the state of Kansas really want to put itself up for such a legal battle?

**Studies and Statements in Support of Gender Affirming Care for Minors Begin On The Next Page.**

## **1.The World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) Standards of Care for the HEalth of Transexual, Transgender, and Gender Nonconforming People. 7th Version.**

Link:

[https://www.wpath.org/media/cms/Documents/SOC%20v7/SOC%20V7\\_English.pdf](https://www.wpath.org/media/cms/Documents/SOC%20v7/SOC%20V7_English.pdf)

- **1. Public Policy and WPATH Statement of Support** “Health is promoted through public policies and legal reforms that promote tolerance and equity for gender and sexual diversity and that eliminate prejudice, discrimination, and stigma. WPATH is committed for these changes in public policies and legal reforms” p.1-2
- **2. WPATH’s Standards of care and their benefits.** “These principles include the following: “Exhibit respect for patients with nonconforming gender identities (do not pathologize differences in gender identity or expression); provide care (or refer to knowledgeable colleagues) that affirms patients’ gender identities and reduces the distress of gender dysphoria, when present; become knowledgeable about the health care needs of transsexual, transgender, and gender nonconforming people, including the benefits and risks of treatment options for gender dysphoria; match the treatment approach to the specific needs of patients, particularly their goals for gender expression and need for relief from gender dysphoria; facilitate access to appropriate care; seek patients’ informed consent before providing treatment; offer continuity of care; and be prepared to support and advocate for patients within their families and communities (schools, workplaces, and other settings)” p.3
- **3. Care is needed to combat stigma which lead to prejudice and discrimination. See “Minority Stress”.** “Unfortunately, there is stigma attached to gender nonconformity in many societies around the world. Such stigma can lead to prejudice and discrimination, resulting in “minority stress” (I. H. Meyer, 2003). Minority stress is unique (additive to general stressors experienced by all people), socially based, and chronic, and may make transsexual, transgender, and gender nonconforming individuals more vulnerable to developing mental health concerns such as anxiety and depression (Institute of Medicine, 2011). In addition to prejudice and discrimination in society at large, stigma can contribute to abuse and neglect in one’s relationships with peers and family members, which in turn can lead to psychological distress. However, these symptoms are socially induced and are not inherent to being transsexual, transgender, or gender nonconforming.” p.4
- **4.Fully Reversible Interventions** “Two goals justify intervention with puberty suppressing hormones: (i) their use gives adolescents more time to explore their gender nonconformity and other developmental issues; and (ii) their use may facilitate transition by preventing the development of sex characteristics that are

*difficult or impossible to reverse* if adolescents continue on to pursue sex reassignment. Puberty suppression may continue for a few years, at which time a decision is made to either discontinue all hormone therapy or transition to a feminizing/masculinizing hormone regimen. Pubertal suppression does not inevitably lead to social transition or to sex reassignment.” p.18-19

- **Risks of Withholding Medical Treatment for Adolescents** *Refusing timely medical interventions for adolescents might prolong gender dysphoria and contribute to an appearance that could provoke abuse and stigmatization.* As the level of gender-related abuse is strongly associated with the degree of psychiatric distress during adolescence (Nuttbrock et al., 2010), *withholding puberty suppression and subsequent feminizing or masculinizing hormone therapy is not a neutral option for adolescents.*” p. 21
- **Medical Necessity of Hormone Therapy** Feminizing/masculinizing hormone therapy – the administration of exogenous endocrine agents to induce feminizing or masculinizing changes – *is a medically necessary intervention for many transsexual, transgender, and gender nonconforming individuals with gender dysphoria (Newfield, Hart, Dibble, & Kohler, 2006; Pfäfflin & Junge, 1998)...* Hormone therapy can provide significant comfort to patients who do not wish to make a social gender role transition or undergo surgery, or who are unable to do so (Meyer III, 2009). P.33]
- **Lifelong Preventive and Primary Care is a Necessity** Transsexual, transgender, and gender nonconforming people need health care throughout their lives. For example, *to avoid the negative secondary effects of having a gonadectomy at a relatively young age and/or receiving long-term, high-dose hormone therapy, patients need thorough medical care by providers experienced in primary care and transgender health.* If one provider is not able to provide all services, ongoing communication among providers is essential. Primary care and health maintenance issues should be addressed before, during, and after any possible changes in gender role and medical interventions to alleviate gender dysphoria. While hormone providers and surgeons play important roles in preventive care, every transsexual, transgender, and gender nonconforming person should partner with a primary care provider for overall health care needs (Feldman, 2007).

## 2.Human Rights Foundation: Get The Facts on Gender-Affirming Care

Link: <https://www.hrc.org/resources/get-the-facts-on-gender-affirming-care>

- **1.The Effects of Disinformation** “State legislatures, governors and administrative agencies across the country [are taking steps to eliminate access to gender-affirming care](#) — medically necessary, safe health care backed by

decades of research and supported [by every major medical association](#) representing over 1.3 million U.S. doctors. Some are even going as far as to accuse parents who support their transgender children of child abuse. Those backing these bills are also seeking to ban this care for adults. [A concerted disinformation campaign](#) is not only behind discriminatory laws [but is fueling threats and violence against providers of gender-affirming care](#), preventing them from supporting the communities they are meant to serve” (found in introduction).

- **2. Gender Affirming Care is Life Saving Care** “Gender-affirming care, sometimes referred to as transition-related care, *is life-saving healthcare for transgender people of all ages.* It is not a single category of services but instead is a range of services, including mental health care, medical care, and social services. *At all ages, clear, well-established, evidence-based standards of care exist for who can access what form of gender affirming care, and when they are eligible to receive it.*” (found under “What exactly is gender-affirming care?”)
- **3. Gender Affirming Care Is Safe, Evidence Based, and Age Appropriate** “Gender affirming care is always delivered in age-appropriate, evidence-based ways, and decisions to provide care are made in consultation with doctors and parents. Collectively representing more than 1.3 million doctors across the United States, [every major medical and mental health organization — including the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Psychological Association](#) — recognizes that it is medically necessary to support people in affirming their gender identity.” (found under “What exactly is gender-affirming care?”)
- **4. Childhood Gender Affirming Care** “transgender and non-binary people who begin transitioning during childhood or adolescence work closely with parents and health care providers — including mental health providers — to determine which changes to make at a given time that are age-appropriate and in the best interest of the child. *At all stages, parents, young people and medical professionals make decisions together, and no permanent medical interventions happen until a transgender person is old enough to give truly informed consent.* Prior to puberty, transition is entirely social, and may involve changing names, pronouns, clothing, and hairstyles. During and after puberty, some medical treatments may be available, but only after significant consideration and consultation between the youth, their families and their health care providers. (found in section, “What does it mean for children to transition? Aren’t they too young to do so?”)
- **5. Puberty Blockers are safe, fully reversible, and life saving.** “Puberty blockers are safe. *They were approved by the FDA to treat precocious puberty in cisgender youth in 1993,* citing minimal side effects and high efficacy; 30 years later, puberty blockers remain the gold standard treatment for precocious puberty

in cisgender youth. All youth who are taking puberty blockers — cisgender or transgender — are monitored by their care team for any side effects or complications. Puberty blockers are fully reversible. If a person stops taking puberty blockers, normal puberty will resume, with minimal long-term effects, if any. While there may be some loss of bone mineral density, this can be easily addressed with calcium and vitamin D supplements. Previous research has also shown that cisgender youth who take puberty blockers for precocious puberty have normal fertility and reproductive function. Puberty blockers can also be **life-saving**: Previous studies have found that transgender and non-binary youth who are able to receive puberty blockers report positive psychosocial impacts, including increased well-being and decreased depression. Other recent studies have found that receipt of puberty blockers can dramatically reduce risk of suicidality — in some cases by over 70% — among transgender youth, compared to those who were unable to access desired treatment.” (found in section, “What are puberty blockers? Why are they used? Are they safe?”)

- **6. Gender Affirming Hormones Are Typically Not Prescribed until a person is at least 18 years old** “Gender affirming hormones are typically not prescribed until a person is at least 18 years old. Though adolescents may receive gender-affirming hormones starting in their late teens, this is only done with physician approval, parental consent and informed consent from the adolescent in question, and is typically reserved for those adolescents who have been on puberty blockers and/or socially transitioned for some time.” (found under section, “What are cross-sex hormones or gender-affirming hormones? Why are they used? Are they safe?”)
- **7. “Gender affirming hormones are safe in both youth and adults** with provider supervision and appropriate management. Depending how long a person has been taking gender-affirming hormones, the effects may be fully or partially reversible as well. The informed consent process involves discussions about side effects and benefits—as with any informed consent process for medication or treatments—including discussions about fertility.” (found under section, “What are cross-sex hormones or gender-affirming hormones? Why are they used? Are they safe?”)
- **8. Every Single Major Medical Organization Support Gender Affirming Care** “Every single major medical organization, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association and the American Psychiatric Association, supports the provision of age-appropriate, gender-affirming care for transgender and non-binary people. These organizations represent millions of doctors, researchers and mental health professionals in the United States. Gender-affirming care has always existed and isn’t a new phenomenon — it’s just that in recent years, extremist politicians have made it into an issue for their

own self-gain.” (found under section, “What do doctors have to say about gender affirming care? Do they think it's necessary?”)

- **9. Being Trans is Not a Trend or “Social Contagion” or New** “Being transgender is **not new**. Transgender people have always existed and will continue to exist regardless of harmful laws that pass.
  - One thing that has changed is that people are more willing to be out about their gender identity (and sexual orientation) and live openly as LGBTQ+ in all facets of their lives. This is happening because transgender people feel safer about coming out. [Public support for LGBTQ+ rights](#), and acceptance of LGBTQ+ people, are [the highest they've ever been](#).
  - Another thing that has changed is people's awareness of transgender people and gender identity. As transgender people become more visible, and willing to live openly as their authentic selves, people are simply seeing more depictions of transgender people — and encountering more transgender people in their lives.
  - It is also true that people are [openly identifying as LGBTQ+ at younger ages](#). But this is because, in addition to rising national support for pro-equality policies overall, on average, younger age groups hold more pro-equality, LGBTQ+ affirming attitudes and beliefs than older generations. This shift creates a cycle where:
    - Higher acceptance leads more people to come out
    - More people coming out increases visibility of LGBTQ+ people
    - Increased visibility leads to increased acceptance
    - Increased acceptance leads more people to feel safe coming out
  - (all this information was found under the section, “Are people transitioning because it's trendy? It feels like everyone is transgender all of a sudden?”)
  - This is a right-wing theory known as “rapid onset gender dysphoria” or “social contagion” — and it has been thoroughly debunked. The American Psychological Association, the American Psychiatric Association and over 120 other medical associations issued a position statement calling for eliminating the use of this term as a diagnosis, based on a “lack of rigorous empirical support for its existence” and “its likelihood of contributing to harm and mental health burden.” The statement also specifically calls out laws which use this debunked theory to justify anti-trans legislation. (found under section, “Are kids transitioning because of social media, or because their friends are also transitioning?”)
- **10. Detransition and regret rates are extremely low.** “Previous studies have found that de-transitioning is quite rare —with some studies finding levels of de-transition and regret as low as 1% or 2%. Transgender youth who meet criteria for gender dysphoria and who undergo social or medical transition are



actually the least likely to de-transition — and those vast majority of transgender youth remain consistent and persistent in their gender identity over time: One recent study, published in the Academic Journal of Pediatrics, followed over 300 transgender youth after first initiating social transition, and found that over 92% remained consistent and persistent in their gender identity 5 years later.” (found in section, “What if someone transitions and then they change their mind about it? Don’t a lot of people detransition?”)

- **11. These laws are not about the safety of kids- it's discrimination.** “These laws are not about safety — as the safety, efficacy and life-saving nature of gender-affirming care for transgender and non-binary youth and adults is clear. Instead, in ignoring a wealth of scientific evidence and overwhelming support from the medical community, these legislators are attempting to enshrine discrimination into law. Rather than protecting kids, these laws are preventing parents and young people from making informed medical decisions, and doctors and health care providers from providing best-practice care to their patients.” (found in section, “But what about legislators who say they’re protecting kids with laws about gender-affirming care?”)

### **3. Gender-affirming Care for Transgender Patients** *Innovations in Clinical Neuroscience: A peer-reviewed journal providing evidence-based information*

Link: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9341318/>

- **Abstract:** Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual, plus (LGBTQIA+ or LGBTQ+) individuals face a wide array of health disparities both within and separate from the healthcare system. Transgender patients are subject to microaggressions, misgendering, and harassment from providers, medical staff, and fellow patients. These patients experience drastic disparities in suicidality, depression, anxiety, substance use, malignancy, sexually transmitted disease (STD), and victimization of violence. Providers have the opportunity to intervene and positively impact patient experiences through gender-affirming care, but they first require an adequate knowledge base and understanding of the importance of sensitive and inclusive care. Seemingly small interventions, such as listing one’s own pronouns, using gender-neutral language, validating and affirming patients, and utilizing appropriate mental and physical health screenings, can lead to significant impacts on the patient experience, health outcomes, and quality of life. This article will discuss some of the most common disparities and obstacles faced by transgender patients and will argue the paramount role of the provider in establishing gender-affirming care

and some high-impact avenues which the provider, regardless of specialty, may pursue when caring for these patients.

- **1. Effects on Gender Expression** “For various reasons, including but not limited to comfort, safety, self-realization, laws, institutional guidelines, and conformity to social norms, the gender expression of a person may not necessarily correlate to their gender identity.” (Found in 2nd to last paragraph of the introduction)
- **2. Mortality Rates for Transgender People as a Result of Violence**  
*“Furthermore, increased rates of IPV and physical and sexual abuse in this population may additionally trigger posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or secondary trauma.<sup>13</sup> Tragically, mortality from violence is significant among this population, particularly in further intersectionalities. Some studies estimate that up to 93 percent of transgender homicide victims in the US are Black or Latinx transgender women. Their homicide rates are even higher than cisgender Black and Latina women, even though they represent a smaller population.<sup>8</sup> Trauma-informed care and sensitive exams should thus be a pillar of treatment for all patients, but especially for this population.”* (found in section, Practice Point: Addressing Appropriate Screening and Preventative Healthcare in Transgender Patients)
- **3. Lack of Care, Homophobia/Transphobia Are Chronic Stressors**  
“Substance use disorders originate from biopsychosocial etiologies and often begin as coping mechanisms or self-treatment for abuse or psychiatric illness.<sup>13</sup> Transphobia and homophobia lead to chronic stressors and stigma playing into the minority stress model; this frequently progresses to coping mechanisms becoming increasingly maladaptive, often resulting in high-risk substance use and sexual behavior. (found in section, Practice Point: Addressing Mental Health Issues in Transgender Patients)
- **4. Importance of Patient-Caretaker Relationships** *“Furthermore, a trusting and effective provider-patient relationship, formal or informal psychotherapy and cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), and affirmative care are effective in reducing symptoms of anxiety, depression, and hypervigilance and further foster patient agency with improved long-term physical and mental health.<sup>14</sup>”* (found in section, Practice Point: Addressing Mental Health Issues in Transgender Patients)
- **5. Trans Children are not just “in a phase”** “Gender exploration is thus a normal facet of social development. This does not, however, suggest that a child or adolescent who identifies as a specific gender is merely exploring these identities, but rather, that they may have already begun to establish their identity. Nearly all cisgender children will begin to identify with their assigned sex by the age of 3 years, with corresponding gender expression based on their playmates, toys, and clothing.<sup>21</sup> Research supports that development of gender identity in most individuals, whether cisgender or transgender, becomes noticeable and



stable between the ages of 3 and 8 years old. (Found under section, “Practice Point: Transgender Patients in Pediatrics”)

- **6. Gender Affirming Care Decreases Anxiety and Depression Among Trans Kids** “The research indicates, however, that transgender and gender minority children who receive meaningful gender identity support may not be prone to the increased prevalence of anxiety and depression.<sup>22</sup>” (Found under section, “Practice Point: Transgender Patients in Pediatrics”)
- **7. Gender Affirming Surgeries Prevent Sexual Assault** “Nonaccess to gender-affirming surgery has been shown to confer 73-percent greater odds of SAs in transgender patients.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the literature suggests that one of the most significant interventions by which providers may assist patients is letter writing. Both hormone therapy and gender-affirming surgery are often difficult for patients to access or obtain, frequently due to legal red tape or insurance requirements.”
- **8. Conclusions from Study** “Gender-affirming care has consistently been shown to improve quality of life, improve health outcomes, and reduce rates of SI and SAs. Healthcare providers and medical staff, regardless of field or specialty, have the opportunity and responsibility to provide sensitive and gender-affirming care and hold the power to positively influence patient quality of life and even life expectancy... Gender-affirming care starts the moment that the patient schedules or considers scheduling an appointment, but must continue through every interaction, great or small, thereafter.” (found in section “Conclusions”)

#### 4. US Department of Health and Human Services Guide on: Gender Affirming Care and Young People

Link: <https://opa.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/2023-08/gender-affirming-care-young-people.pdf>

- **Gender Affirming Care is Crucial For Health and Wellbeing** “For transgender and nonbinary children and adolescents, early gender affirming care is crucial to overall health and well-being as it allows the child or adolescent to focus on social transitions and can increase their confidence while navigating the healthcare system.”
- **Research Shows Gender Affirming Care is Good for Mental Health** “Research demonstrates that gender-affirming care improves the mental health and overall well-being of gender diverse children and adolescents. Because gender-affirming care encompasses many facets of healthcare needs and support, it has been shown to increase positive outcomes for transgender and nonbinary children and adolescents.”
- **Over 50% of LGBTQIA+ Children Contemplated Suicide in 2020** “The Trevor Project’s 2021 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health found that 52

percent of LGBTQ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year.”

## 5. Mental Health Outcomes in Transgender and Nonbinary Youths Receiving Gender-Affirming Care

Link: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35212746/>

- **Findings:** “ In this prospective cohort of 104 Trans and Nonbinary youths aged 13-30 years, receipt of gender affirming care, including puberty blockers and gender-affirming hormones, was associated with 60% lower odds of moderate or sever depression and 73% lower odds of suicidality over a 12 month follow up” (found in Key Points box on p. 1)
- **Legislation targeting gender affirming care will have a negative impact on trans and nonbinary kids.** “ Our study provides quantitative evidence that access to puberty blocker or gender affirming hormones in a multidisciplinary gender-affirming setting was associated with mental health improvements among trans and nonbinary youths over a relatively short time frame of 1 year... Our findings have important policy implications, suggesting that the recent wave of legislation restricting access to gender-affirming care may have significant negative outcomes in the well-being of trans and nonbinary youths.” (found under conclusions section, p. 10)

## 6. Reduction in Mental Health Treatment Utilization Among Transgender Individuals After Gender-Affirming Surgeries: A Total Population Study

American Journal of Psychiatry

Link: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31581798/>

- **Conclusions:** “In the first total population study of transgender individuals with a gender incongruence diagnosis, the longitudinal association between gender-affirming surgery and reduced likelihood of mental health treatment lends support to the decision to provide gender-affirming surgeries to transgender individual who seek them” (p. 727)
- **Mood and Anxiety Disorders are improved with gender affirming hormones and surgical treatment** “ In analyses adjusted for sociodemographic factors, those diagnosed with gender incongruence were about six times as likely to have had a health care visit due to a mood or anxiety disorder in 2015, more than three times as likely to have received prescriptions for antidepressant and anxiolytic medication in 2015, and more than six times as likely to have been hospitalized after a suicide attempt.” (p. 730)

- “Specifically, the likelihood of being treated for a mood or anxiety disorder was reduced by 8% from each year since last gender affirming surgery” (p.730)
- **Lack of coverage for Gender Affirming Treatment has lasting negative effects on transgender and nonbinary people.** “Therefore, in many contexts around the world, lack of coverage for gender-affirming treatments drive the use of non-medically surprised hormones and surgeries, thereby exacerbating physical health risks and the other epidemics disproportionately borne by the global transgender population, including suicide and HIV infection. The longitudinal association found in the present study between gender-affirming surgery and reduced mental health treatment utilization, combined with the physical and mental health risks of surgery denial, supports policies that provide gender-affirming surgeries to transgender individuals who seek such treatments” (p.733)

## 7. Medical Association Statements in Support of Health Care for Transgender People and Youth

Link:

<https://glad.org/medical-association-statements-supporting-trans-youth-healthcare-and-against-discriminatory/>

- **1. The following organizations have issued statements in support of health care for transgender people and youth:**
  - [American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry](#)
  - [American Academy of Dermatology](#)
  - [American Academy of Pediatrics](#)
  - [American Academy of Physician Assistants](#)
  - [American Medical Association](#)
  - [American Nurses Association](#)
  - [American Association of Clinical Endocrinology](#)
  - [American Association of Geriatric Psychiatry](#)
  - [American College Health Association](#)
  - [American College of Nurse-Midwives](#)
  - [American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists](#)
  - [American College of Physicians](#)
  - [American Counseling Association](#)
  - [American Heart Association](#)
  - [American Medical Student Association](#)
  - [American Psychiatric Association](#)
  - [American Society of Plastic Surgeons](#)
  - [American Society for Reproductive Medicine](#)
  - [American Urological Association](#)

- Endocrine Society
- Federation of Pediatric Organizations
- GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality
- The Journal of the American Medical Association
- National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
- National Association of Social Workers
- Ohio Children's Hospital
- Pediatric Endocrine Society
- Pediatrics (Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics ) and Seattle Children's Hospital
- Texas Medical Association
- Texas Pediatric Society
- United States Professional Association for Transgender Health (USPATH)
- World Health Organization (WHO)
- World Medical Association
- World Professional Association for Transgender Health
- **2.The American Medical Association passed a resolution to protect evidence-based care for transgender and gender-diverse youth in June 2023. This resolution was co sponsored by:**
  - The American Academy of Pediatrics
  - The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
  - The American Urological Association
  - The American Society for Reproductive Medicine
  - The American College of Physicians
  - The American Association of Clinical Endocrinology
  - GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ+ Equality
  - the AMA's Medical Student Section
    - The resolution stated the widespread misinformation and bans on care “do not reflect the research landscape. More than 2,000 scientific studies have examined aspects of gender-affirming care since 1975, including more than 260 studies cited in the Endocrine Society's [Clinical Practice Guideline](#).”
- **American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry: Jan 6th 2022**
  - The AAP's 2018 policy statement '[Ensuring Comprehensive Care and Support for Transgender and Gender-Diverse Children and Adolescents](#)' defines gender affirmation as developmentally appropriate, nonjudgmental, supportive care provided in a safe clinical space. The policy states that pediatric providers, often the first medical professionals to discover a child's gender identity concerns, have a special role in caring for these patients who have a high risk of depression, anxiety and suicide.

The care model is not one-size-fits-all, said Brittany Allen, M.D., FAAP, a member of the AAP Section on LGBTQ Executive Committee. It recognizes the wide spectrum of normal, healthy gender identities.”

- **American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Nov 8th 2019**
  - (AACAP) supports the use of current evidence-based clinical care with minors. AACAP strongly opposes any efforts – legal, legislative, and otherwise – to block access to these recognized interventions. Blocking access to timely care has been shown to increase youths’ risk for suicidal ideation and other negative mental health outcomes. Consistent with AACAP’s policy against conversion therapy, AACAP recommends that youth and their families formulate an individualized treatment plan with their clinician that addresses the youth’s unique mental health needs under the premise that all gender identities and expressions are not inherently pathological.”
- **American Academy of Dermatology June 1st 2021**
  - The AADA recognizes the dignity and identity of transgender individuals and advocates for dermatologists’ ability to provide therapy and procedures that help the mental and physical well-being of these and all patients. Transgender and gender-diverse individuals can benefit greatly from medical and surgical gender-affirming treatments. These treatments are often medically necessary for the health and well-being of these patients and are not to be considered as cosmetic or elective. Decisions about care should remain within the confines of the physician-patient relationship, guided by strong medical evidence and the best interests of the individual patient.
- **American Medical Association April 26th 2021**
  - Empirical evidence has demonstrated that trans and non-binary gender identities are normal variations of human identity and expression. For gender diverse individuals, standards of care and accepted medically necessary services that affirm gender or treat gender dysphoria may include mental health counseling, non-medical social transition, gender-affirming hormone therapy, and/or gender-affirming surgeries. Clinical guidelines established by professional medical organizations for the care of minors promote these supportive interventions based on the current evidence and that enable young people to explore and live the gender that they choose. Every major medical association in the United States recognizes the medical necessity of transition-related care for improving the physical and mental health of transgender people.
- **American Nurses Association October 26th 2022**

- The American Nurses Association strongly opposes any legislation or policy action that places restrictions on transgender health care and that criminalizes gender-affirming care. Due to recent state legislative efforts, transgender and gender-diverse youth and their parents or guardians who choose to access gender-affirming care may come under legal assault in many states. Health care professionals, including nurses and advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) who provide gender-affirming care, may also be subject to judicial process or other legal action. These restrictive laws interfere with the trust and confidentiality between patients, parents or guardians, and clinicians in the delivery of evidence-based care. The legislative intent and medical claims behind these laws are not grounded in reputable science and conflict with the nurse's obligation to promote, advocate, and protect the rights, health, and safety of patients. ANA's Position Statement [Nursing Advocacy for LGBTQ+ Populations](#) (2018) underlines the mandate that nurses "must deliver culturally congruent care and advocate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning (LGBTQ+) populations."
- **American Academy of Pediatrics Aug 10th 2022**
  - There is strong consensus among the most prominent medical organizations worldwide that evidence-based, gender-affirming care for transgender children and adolescents is medically necessary and appropriate. It can even be lifesaving. The decision of whether and when to start gender-affirming treatment, which does not necessarily lead to hormone therapy or surgery, is personal and involves careful consideration by each patient and their family.
- **American Academy of Pediatrics Mar 16th 2021**
  - The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that youth who identify as transgender have access to comprehensive, gender-affirming, and developmentally appropriate health care that is provided in a safe and inclusive clinical space. We also recommend that playing on sports teams helps youth develop self-esteem, correlates positively with overall mental health, and appears to have a protective effect against suicide. These bills not only ignore these recommendations, they undermine them.
- **American Academy of Physician Assistants May 24th 2019**
  - All the undersigned associations have adopted policies or otherwise support addressing the specific health concerns of LGBTQ people, including opposition to discrimination in health care and insurance coverage based on an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity. As part of that commitment, our organizations support public and private

health insurance coverage for the treatment of gender dysphoria when medically necessary

- **American Association of Clinical Endocrinology Mar 7th 2022**
  - Transgender and gender diverse people represent a sizable and growing segment of the U.S. and world Population. It is estimated that over 1 million people in the U.S. alone are transgender or gender diverse. Many transgender and gender diverse people seek hormone therapy under the supervision of an endocrinologist or other medically trained health care professional to better align their bodies with their gender identities. Being transgender is widely accepted to require medical treatment for those patients who seek it. Medical treatment may include behavioral assessment, hormone therapy, and surgery. These treatments are well established in the relevant established, international professional society guidelines including those from the Endocrine Society co-sponsored by the American Association of Clinical Endocrinology (AACE) and the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH).
- **American Association of Geriatric Psychiatry Feb 7th 2018**
  - With the overarching goals of improving the healthcare of older transgender individuals and of inspiring pertinent clinical research, a session at the 2017 American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry Annual Meeting focused on an interdisciplinary approach to transgender aging. The older the transgender adult, the more likely the individual grew up in a historical context when there was greater social stigma towards their gender identity, even among mental health professionals... In spite of notable health disparities, some evidence points to resilience among transgender older adults. The mental health professional often serves as the first contact for a patient who is struggling with gender identity.
- **American College Health Association Feb 8th 2023**
  - As a society, we have made significant strides in removing barriers and improving health care and outcomes for transgender and gender diverse patients. Individuals feel more comfortable disclosing their authentic gender and are doing so at younger ages. Health care services should be made universal to all and should not discriminate in any way, whether this be on age; race/ethnicity, sex; sexual orientation; gender (including gender identity); marital status; physical size; religious, spiritual or cultural identity; psychological/physical/learning disability; socioeconomic status; or veteran status. This is consistent with the long-held values of cultural inclusion, respect, equality, and equity that ACHA has advocated for. Therefore, ACHA opposes any legislation, both state or federal, that would

restrict or limit access to gender-related medically necessary services for transgender youth and adults.

- **American College of Nurse-Midwives Mar 2021**
  - The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) supports efforts to provide transgender and gender non-binary (TGNB) people with access to safe, comprehensive, culturally-responsive, and respectful health care. ACNM is committed to taking the following actions: Incorporating gender-inclusive language into ACNM documents. Offering educational opportunities to members of the midwifery community on how to care for TGNB people. Advancing legislation and policies that prohibit discrimination based on gender expression and/or identity. Supporting measures to ensure TGNB people have comprehensive and unrestricted access to health insurance coverage.
- **American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Jan 2017**
  - The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists opposes discrimination on the basis of gender identity, urges public and private health insurance plans to cover necessary services for individuals with gender dysphoria, and advocates for inclusive, thoughtful, and affirming care for transgender individuals.
- **American College of Physicians April 24th 2023**
  - A growing number of states are banning gender-affirming health care and pursuing anti-LGBTQ+ legislation, contrary to ACP policy, which urges non-discrimination in health care. ACP opposes these restrictions on health care for transgender individuals, who already may face extreme barriers to accessing care, and strongly objects to any unnecessary government interference with any health care services.
- **American Counseling Association Mar 29th 2019**
  - The American Counseling Association (ACA) is committed to nondiscrimination and prevention of harassment in all forms (verbal, physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological), including protections for all diverse groups including protections for transgender and nonbinary individuals. ACA recognizes the stress and psychological impact of discrimination and is committed to helping counselors advocate for nondiscrimination policies and practices in their schools, colleges/universities, clinical mental health settings, communities, and in the nation.



Dear Chair Landwehr and Members of the Kansas House Health and Human Services Committee:

You may or may not recognize me from around the statehouse. I am someone who has tried to stay as active and as civically engaged as possible in Kansas, because I am someone who does not feel as though my government is treating people like myself fairly.

I would hope that this comes as a shock to any lawmaker reading this testimony, however, I am somewhat unsure that it will. I urge anyone who reads this who is also surprised that there are people like myself who live in our great state who feel disenfranchised by the governing body I am addressing right now to reach out to me and start an open and honest dialogue.

Unfortunately, I personally feel that the majority of lawmakers in the Kansas Legislature seemingly do not have the welfare of every Kansas resident in mind, rather, they are sitting in their positions for their own political gain.

I should hope that it occurs to many of you that Kansans do not WANT to spend their time writing opposition testimony, let alone care about the actions this Legislature is taking. I know many Kansans who WANT to spend their free time focusing on passions, hobbies, and doing things that make life worth living.

Life, however, cannot be worth living if we consistently must, time and again, worry about actions taken by those who write the rules that dictate how our society operates. In a perfect world, a Kansas government of the people, by the people, and most importantly, FOR the people, will not intervene in Kansans' lives when they are attempting to receive life-saving healthcare such as abortion, gender-affirming care, or any other practice deemed acceptable by scientists and experts in their field.

I urge any one of you to step outside of your bubble, and attempt to live one day in the life of a transgender Kansan. It is clear to me from the actions taken by this body, as someone who identifies as trans, that despite claiming to understand healthcare and having concerns surrounding gender-affirming care, many lawmakers do NOT have a clue what it means to be trans.

Where then, is this type of policy born from? The answer is fear. Fear of a changing world, fear of losing power, and most importantly, fear of the happiness of others. For that, I am truly sorry for anyone in our world who lacks that joyful experience. Seeing those around me thrive is one of the most wonderful things that I could ever experience.

I know that you will all receive a large amount of testimony that will explain the PROVEN science and safety behind gender-affirming healthcare, which is why I won't give you any more reason than this to vote NO on HB 2791: please have a heart, and think of the children whose mental health will be detrimentally affected if these bills become law.

If you can't, then I hope you will remember that yours is an elected position, and there are those who would like to see you out of your position, even if you have enjoyed the comfortability of it for a great deal of time. As for me, however, I will support any lawmaker who decides to be a proud ally of the LGBTQ+ community, not only in what they say, but also in the actions they take.

It's difficult to live a comfortable life if you are consistently making decisions that harm other people. Please vote NO on HB 2791- not just for the LGBTQ+ community in Kansas, but for your own peace of mind.

Thank you,

Jae Moyer  
*(They/Them/Theirs)*

HB 2791  
Jenna Bellemere  
Private Citizen  
2/26/0024  
jbellemere314@gmail.com  
Written Only  
Opponent

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jenna Bellemere, and I am a voter in Leavenworth County. I write today to encourage this body to vote no on HB 2792.

The past three years have seen an unprecedented expansion of the attack on transgender youth, both in our state and nationwide. Legislation like HB 2791 exemplifies the cruelty and injustice of these attacks: it targets children, the most vulnerable among us, threatening their ability to access lifesaving medical care. It is unjustifiable and its passage should be unconscionable to anyone with even the slightest empathy for trans youth.

Anyone familiar with the scientific literature understands that this care is necessary and lifesaving for many people. This is not in dispute. The healthcare this bill would make inaccessible saved my life, and the life of many of my friends. I find it impossible to believe that the supporters of HB 2791 have never encountered similar stories to mine, and yet they persist in promoting junk science in the hopes of stripping us of our most basic human rights.

Unfortunately, it is becoming increasingly clear that some of the most powerful people in our state do not understand (or do not care to understand) the above. The same political machine responsible for the most disastrous and unpopular tax "experiment" in the history of the state has now turned their gaze on a new enemy: children just trying to go to the doctor. Once again, regular people are left to pick up the pieces in the wake of their elected leaders' failure to govern.

HB 2791 and the political movement behind it are representative of everything broken in our political system. Do not allow yourself to be made into a tool for extremists to inflict their hate on innocent people.

Once again, I urge you all to vote no on HB 2791.

HB 2791  
Jennifer Ancell  
PRIVATE CITIZEN  
2/27/2024  
ancelljen@gmail.com  
WRITTEN ONLY  
OPPONENT

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee,  
Thank you for allowing me to share my perspective on HB 2791. My name is Jennifer Ancell and I am a voter in Johnson County asking you to vote no on this bill.

During my time as an educator, I have watched many young adults struggle with gender dysphoria. It is a complex issue for these students, their families and medical care professionals. Without proper assessment and treatment, a disproportionate number of these students face depression and anxiety. For this reason, gender affirming care is life saving care.

My concern with this legislation is that it overrides the decisions of parents and medical professionals.

This is an individual and private matter that does not require political consideration. Medical professionals have the benefit of evidenced based protocols in place that help these students. My fear is that this legislation will have far reaching effects and actually harm the lives of young people. Please defer to parents, trained therapists and health care providers to do what is best for these young people. I ask that you not overlook the perspective and expertise those who know these individuals best. Allow them to get the care they need without political intervention.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak to support our young people who struggle with gender dysphoria. While they are small in number, they disproportionately suffer from depression and anxiety. Make sure they get the care they need without fear of repercussions from broadly reaching legislation like this. Please vote NO on the passage of HB 2791. Thank you.

HB 2791  
Jennifer Peters  
private citizen  
2/23/2024  
dragonjen993@gmail.com  
written only  
opponent

Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Jennifer Peters and I am a voter/resident in Shawnee County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 279.

Please vote "NO" on this bill, it's harmful to everyone. Doctors know more about healthcare, and I firmly believe we need to leave these choices up to the doctors and nurses who's studied long and hard to be able to treat us - their patients. I was raised in a medical house hold, many of my family members are nurses and CNA's, and I know they've studied hard to be able to graduate medical school to help others.

The proposed bill doesn't just harm your citizens, it harms those who studied hard and worked hard to be able to help others. I won't sugar coat this next part.

I have lost transgendered friends to suicide. Why? because they could not get the care they needed due to similar laws. It hurts no one to let people live authentically, and if that authentic upsets you, that's on you. I've lost count of how many of my friends took their lives every time a new anti-trans bill came out. and I am not about to sit here and watch literal children become this depressed too.

Kids are way smarter than we give them credit for. And they sometimes know when something's wrong before we adults do. Its our jobs to listen to them and figure out solutions. Not harm them mentally and force them into a rigid box and cause more mental scarring. I've always known that I'm genderfluid, ever since I was ten or so. I'm 30 now. still genderfluid. My parents supported me the whole way, all they wanted was for me to know myself and be happy with the life I live. and that's the very same treatment I want for this generation.

I appreciate the time you took to hear me out, it's hard for me to bring the loss of so many friends up, but it sometimes takes extremes for anyone to listen.

I was a smart kid, I knew I wasn't female 100% of the time as a child. Sure, that's what the birth certificate says, but that piece of paper doesn't tell my story. It doesn't tell you who I am. And it won't tell you who countless other trans individuals are either, that's their stories to tell.

I greatly appreciate the time you took to hear me out on everything I outlined here tonight. Please vote "NO" on HB 2791, for the sake of every trans individual out there who's stories has just began.

HB 2791  
Jessica Porter  
Private Citizen  
5/8/1987  
jp4410@me.com  
Written Only  
Opponent

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you for giving me time to share my thoughts on HB 2791. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote "NO" on HB 2791

I strongly oppose this bill because it puts children's lives in the hands of the government instead of in their parent's hands. It seems contradictory to pass bills such as the Parents' Bill of Rights, then turn around and try to pass a Bill that tells parents they do not know what is best for their child.

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of HB 2791. Thank you."

HB 2791  
Jocelyn Bennett  
Private citizen  
7/16/1970  
jocelynbennett@yahoo.com  
Written only  
Opponent

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Jocelyn Bennett and I am a voter in Johnson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791

Blocking the passage of HB 2791 matters to me because gender affirming care is lifesaving, every person should have a right to make decisions about their own body, and the language of the bill is general enough to be easily misconstrued.

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of HB 2791. Thank you.

Jonathan Smith

Private Citizen

02/26/2024

HB 2791 - Enacting the forbidding abuse child transitions act, restricting use of state funds to promote gender transitioning, prohibiting healthcare professionals from treating children whose gender identity

Written-Only Opposition testimony

Hearing Date: February 29th, 2024 1:30pm

Committee on Health and Human Services

Greetings Chair Landwehr and esteemed committee persons. My name is Jonathan Smith and I will be urging you to vote **NO** on HB 2791. This bill is government overreach; it is a wild over-step and widespread implementation of a fringe and harmful set of personal beliefs on the greater public of the state of Kansas. It is a backslide of personal freedoms under the false guise of protecting children and will be nothing but used against you as fodder during election season.

There is no reasonable solution I can ever see the government stepping between a doctor with their hippocratic oath, and a patient in need of care. In every situation, the doctor will either treat the patient ethically, or refer the patient to a different doctor for a second opinion. The government has no place in the healthcare industry, as the public has already publicly stated in August of 2022.

This ideology, that believes that transgender individuals aren't allowed, by force of government, to seek their own personal sense of care, in the pursuit of their own personal happiness, as is dictated by **The Declaration of Independence**, is so backward from everything our ancestors fought against during the revolutionary war. I can't even imagine what they would think, looking upon those of us choosing to restrict the fundamental rights of every red-blooded Kansan that chooses to live by their own way of life.

This bill will cause far more deaths, by way of suicide, than doing literally nothing ever would. There is a **strong** correlation between an increase in anti-transgender legislation and increased suicide rates and hate crimes against transgender individuals.

(<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/nov/22/transgender-deaths-remembrance-report>)

This is not a winning issue, this is not something Kansans care about. There are so many more important issues than whatever the heck this is. Please care about more important things like strengthening background checks and regulations for firearm purchases, losing the food tax, protecting our climate, water, and land, fully funding our public schools, or even improving our elections with ranked-choice voting. There are so many better issues you could be working on instead of wasting your time on this kind of stuff. This will almost certainly be used against you in an election if you vote favorably for this terrible legislation.

In closing, kill this bill, and stop wasting time trying to control Kansans' freedoms. **Do not pass** HB 2791.

Thank you for your time,

Jonathan Smith



Loud Light Comittee Member  
02-27-24  
Kaedaedae@gmail.com

I, Kaden Nelson. am grateful to be given the oppurtunity to have my voice and my opinion heard by the commity concerning HB 2791. I am a voter in Johnson county and am writing today to strongly encourage the committe to vote no.

Gender affirming care is an extremely complicated and multifaceted issue and I believe that doctors should have the utmost freedom and flexibillity when dealing with it. The drugs and methods used, such as cosmetic surgery and hormone blockers, are not exclusive to gender affirming care and therefore it can only be described as discriminatory for creating a bill that specifically prevents gender affirming care while not changing the regulations that doctors use to research or perform medicince. My little brother was recomended hormone blockers by a doctor not because he is trans, but because he started to experience puberty before the age of 8. If these drugs are truly the horror that so many advocates for these bills want you to believe they are, it is still necesarry to solve the problem from the root instead of targeteting and irradicating our trans youth.

I am once again so grateful to have had my voice heard by the council, and I hope I have made a compelling argument to vote against the bill.

PRIVATE CITIZEN

02-27-24

[katelingracehealy@gmail.com](mailto:katelingracehealy@gmail.com)

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Kate Healy and I am a voter in Sedgwick County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791.

One of my best friends is transgender, and we depended on each other during some of the most confusing and rocky periods of our lives. She often expressed to me how much she wished she could have received gender affirming care when she was in high school, and how much it hurt to understand yourself, but refuse oxygen to who you really are. All the different ways she needed to silence herself created debilitating patterns, because she was told to sublimate her own sense of self.

because she was told to sublimate her sense of self, over and over again. In order to allow others to view her in a certain way, she needed to shut up and pretend. It's terribly unhealthy to live in a lie for too long, gender affirming care is life saving care.

This legislation would not only restrict medically safe and proven to be beneficial procedures for young trans people, but it would threaten physicians and twist fear into their daily lives. I believe that legislation like this actually takes power away from the credibility of government. It has the effect of making lawmakers seem mostly eager to ban and ready to restrict, instead of playing a supportive and strengthening role in our lives.

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of HB 2791. Thank you.

HB 2791  
Katie Baker  
True Colors Flint Hills, Executive Director  
2/27/2024  
director@truecolorsfh.com  
Written Only  
Opponent

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, I appreciate you taking the time to hear my thoughts on HB 2791 today. My name is Katie Baker and I am a voter in Riley County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791.

For the past two years I have led the non-profit, True Colors Flint Hills. We are a youth-led organization providing direct service, advocacy and education in support of LGBTQIA+ youth. I work with trans and non-binary high school students on a daily basis. The youth come here to access a gender-affirming clothing closet, meals and therapy referrals, but mostly they come here to find community with other peers and safe adults. True Colors is a judgment-free space where youth can express themselves for who they are really are, and find resources to live an authentic life. When youth are able to access gender-affirming care they flourish, they feel at home in their bodies for the first time and take pride in their appearance. Their joy is radiant. Gender-affirming care allows the youth to present in their most authentic form and allows them to engage in their lives like never before, they have the confidence to participate in school and hobbies, they are looking to the future, they are able to explore their identities outside of being trans. Because identifying as trans is one aspect of their identity, and when they are embraced for who they are all those other aspects of their being are allowed to shine through as well. By voting no on HB 2791 you are allowing qualified professionals, caregivers and youth to make informed decisions on what is best for youth and their future.

Once again, thank you all for hearing my perspective and the youth I serve. I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of HB 2791. Thank you.

Subject: Testimony for HB 2792 (Katie McDonald, opposed, written)

Dear Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee,

My name is Katie McDonald, and I am a voter in Reno County. I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 2791, the “Forbidding Abusive Child Transitions Act.” HB 2791 would have devastating consequences for transgender youth in Kansas by effectively banning access to life-saving gender-affirming medical care.

It is crucial to understand that gender-affirming care is evidence-based, medically necessary, and safe. Every major medical association advocates against bills like HB 2791 because they restrict patients, families, and their doctors from making their own private medical decisions, instead placing these decisions in the hands of politicians.

The bill's broad language could have significant additional harmful consequences beyond gender-affirming healthcare. It does not clearly define what it means to “promote,” “provide,” or “advocate” for social transition or gender-affirming medical care, potentially impacting mental and medical health professionals, as well as school counselors, teachers, daycare providers, and others who interact with transgender youth. This raises serious constitutional concerns about state employees' free speech rights and discriminates against transgender Kansans.

I urge you to oppose HB 2791 and protect the rights and well-being of transgender youth in Kansas.

Sincerely,  
Katie McDonald

Dear Legislator,

My name is Keighley Miller, and I am writing in partnership with the Kansas Interfaith Action. KIFA is a statewide, multifaith issue advocacy organization that partners with several Christian denominations, as well as Jewish and Muslim Kansans.

I believe we should protect the rights of the LGBTQ+ community here in Kansas. My younger brother and I grew up in a town where we had no LGBTQ+ community. It was a place where words like "gay" and "queer" were used as insults. We both knew we were different, but we didn't really know why. All we knew was we didn't fit in with our peers. Eventually, we both ended up in a community with a great deal of LGBTQ+ support. We were able to figure out who we were, and we came to accept ourselves for what we'd always been made to feel bad about: our difference from the people we grew up around.

My brother came to accept himself as a transman, and I met my wife after I was able to live my truth as a bisexual woman. Without the support of our LGBTQ+ peers, we would have never figured out why we felt out of place in our home town. We learned that being gay or queer were not bad things or things worthy of insults. They are part of who we are, just as much as the color of our skin or the size of our feet are. These qualities are immutable parts of our identities, not something we should have to hide. Can you imagine having to dye your hair or change the color of your eyes just to make other people accept you? LGBTQ+ people deserve to be themselves, especially LGBTQ+ youth.

Perhaps if my brother and I had felt comfortable exploring our identities as children, we would have accepted ourselves sooner instead of feeling bad or wrong for being different. Kids already have a hard time coming to terms with who they are - there should not be legal barriers holding them back from self-discovery. It is cruel and unusual for the state to dictate to kids what they can and cannot be. It is oppression of identity. It will negatively impact the quality of life of transgender and non-binary youth. They should not have to feel wrong or bad, like my brother and I did.

My church, Plymouth Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, supports the LGBTQ+ community because they are God's beloved children. Our church has issued the following statement - "Plymouth Congregational Church affirms that members of the transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming community share with all others the worth associated with being unique individuals created by God. Considering the struggles they currently face, we especially welcome and affirm the transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming youth community. This congregation joyfully and unequivocally welcomes the transgender, non-binary, and gender nonconforming community to share in the life, leadership, and blessings of participation in our community of faith. We also commit ourselves to the work of creating not only a world in which transgender, non-binary, and gender nonconforming people are safe, but also a world in which they thrive."

Sincerely,

Keighley Miller

HB 2791  
Kellie Bubeck  
PRIVATE CITIZEN  
2/27/2024  
kellie.bubeck@gmail.com  
WRITTEN ONLY  
OPPONENT

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, I am a voter in Johnson County, and strongly encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791 as it is harmful to the transgender community and an unnecessary interference into families' private matters.

Kansans deserve the freedom to make their own medical decisions without interference from politicians.

Gender affirming care is healthcare. A study published by the American Academy of Pediatrics revealed alarming levels of attempted suicide among transgender youth.

Gender affirming care is evidence-based, medically necessary, and safe, which is why major medical associations support gender-affirming care and advocate against bills like this.

Rather than protecting kids, these laws are preventing parents and young people from making informed medical decisions, and doctors and health care providers from providing best-practice care to their patients.

Again, please vote no on HB 2791.



**Opponent Written Testimony on House Bill 2791**  
House Committee on Health and Human Services  
Kerry Gooch – Kansas Black Leadership Council  
February 29, 2024

Chair and Members of the Committee,

**It is our firm position as the Kansas Black Leadership Council to stand in opposition to House Bill 2791 because of its several concerns for Black Kansans, particularly members of the transgender community.**

**As a community, we cannot deny the contributions the transgender community has made in the fight for freedom and equality.** Black Transgender men and women are responsible for some of our greatest wins in civil rights history. From Marsha P Johnson and her contributions to the LGBTQ+ Rights movement to the contributions of queer black leaders such as Audré Lorde, Bayard Rustin, and Miss Major Griffin Gracey made in the civil rights spaces. The Black or LGBTQ+ community would not be where it is today without the contributions of our LGBTQ+ members, who, in many regards, have faced discrimination in many forms outside of their racial identity. This is why we, as the black community, will not stand for any attacks on the LGBTQ+ members of our community.

**HB 2791 is it aims to combat an issue that does not exist when we have many pressing issues that do.** In the state of Kansas, there are a plethora of issues our legislature could dedicate itself to that could benefit Black Kansans. From investing in our public schools to decriminalizing marijuana, the legislature could truly center the needs of black communities within the state. The black community expects our taxpayer dollars to go towards making our state a more inclusive and liveable environment, not attacking and marginalizing communities with the very state-sanctioned violence used to keep black people from achieving access, equality, and freedom. As noted for the past several years by medical experts who have come before the legislature, many specialists in gender-affirming care, minors are not receiving gender transition surgeries. The lack of weight the legislature places on trained medical experts in the area of expertise is appalling, and results in wildly unpopular bills like HB2791 that aim to solve an issue that doesnt exist on taxpayer dollars. As a community, we urge you to stop these attacks on the LGBTQ+ communities within our state and actually address the issues we need urgent action on.

**We know, based on the history of state-sanctioned violent policies targeting LGTBQ+ populations, that the black transgender populations face the worst impact.** In their 2020 report on Fatal Violence against Transgender and Nonbinary individuals within the United States, the Human Rights Campaign found that in the violent record number of fatal incidents against transgender and gender non-conforming people, Black Trans women disproportionately made up 66% of the people who were killed. During the HIV/AIDS Epidemic, Black LGBTQ+ people, particularly transgender women, died at disproportionately higher rates. In both of these instances and many more, we can see that due to the role of intersectionality, people who are both Black and Transgender often face the worst outcomes when it comes to anti-LGBTQ+ legislation. Whether it is attitudes, the policies help to foster, or care and practices they ban, many of these policies often result in the disproportionate loss of life for our transgender members of the black community.





**Opponent Written Testimony on House Bill 2791**  
House Committee on Health and Human Services  
Kerry Gooch – Kansas Black Leadership Council  
February 29, 2024

**Lastly, attacking the “social transitioning” of transgender Kansans is the same dehumanization that has led to some of our nation’s greatest atrocities against minority groups.** From slavery to segregation, the Black community has dealt with the effects that dehumanization, especially when reinforced through policy, can have on a community. When we fail to acknowledge the personhood of another individual and treat them with the common decent and respect they deserve as a human, we are causing major harm. HB 2791 aims to do exactly this as it relates to “social transitioning” in the bill. This is an attempt by legislators to strong-arm state agencies, employees, and those whom state funding touches to be required not to recognize the personhood and identity of other human beings. This could be as simple as a teacher, social worker, or doctor calling a child their preferred name or pronoun. This is a gross misuse of the legislative power and, as history has shown us, will always fall on the wrong side of history. No bill that calls for the dehumanization of another group should ever pass out of committee chambers.

**In Conclusion – HB 2791 is a nonsensical bill that aims to solve an issue that does not exist and calls for the state-sanctioned dehumanization that puts black LGBTQ+ Kansans at high risk.** It is your job as a legislator to create a sound policy that benefits all members of your communities. Spending taxpayer dollars to attack our communities around issues that don't exist is a misuse of power and strays from the reasons your constituents elected you. This is why KBLC urges you to vote in opposition to HB 2791.

February 18, 2024

Dear Health and Human Services Committee,

I am writing to express my profound concern and opposition to HB2791 collectively known as the "Forbidding Abuse Child Transitions Act" and the legislation prohibiting gender transition surgeries on minors, respectively. As a mental health provider working within the school system, I am deeply troubled by the potential harm and disruption these bills could inflict on schools and the students they serve, particularly those who are transgender or gender non-conforming.

HB2791's restrictions on the use of state funds to promote gender transitioning and its prohibition of healthcare professionals from providing necessary care to children whose gender identity is inconsistent with their sex pose significant obstacles to supporting the social transition of students within schools. By authorizing civil causes of action against healthcare providers and professional discipline against physicians who provide gender transition treatments to children, this legislation creates a chilling effect that could deter healthcare professionals from offering essential care to transgender youth.

The social transition process, which may include changes in name, pronouns, and gender presentation, is a critical aspect of affirming the gender identity of transgender students and promoting their mental health and well-being. Schools play a pivotal role in creating inclusive and supportive environments where all students feel valued, respected, and safe to express their authentic selves. HB2791 and HB2792 not only undermine the ability of schools to support the social transition of students but also perpetuate stigma, discrimination, and marginalization against transgender and gender non-conforming youth.

As a mental health provider committed to the well-being of students, I urge you to oppose HB2791 and to instead prioritize policies and practices that affirm the identities and experiences of transgender youth in schools. It is imperative that we uphold the principles of dignity, equity, and inclusion and work collaboratively to create environments where all students can thrive.

Thank you for considering my perspective on this critical issue. I remain hopeful that you will stand against legislation that undermines the rights and well-being of transgender students and advocate for policies that promote inclusivity, respect, and affirmation in our schools.

Sincerely,

Kiley S. Lockett, LMSW

District Mental Health Coordinator

Lawrence Public Schools

HB 2791  
Kim Bellemere  
Private Citizen  
2/26/2024  
kbellemere@gmail.com  
Written Only  
Opponent

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, my name is Kim Bellemere and I am a voter from Leavenworth County. Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts on HB 2791. I'm writing today to ask you to vote no on this dangerous bill.

My husband and I are the parents of a remarkable transgender woman. She is brilliant, beautiful, and funny. She's a good friend and sister, and she cares deeply about her community. Transitioning has been far from easy, and she has worked incredibly hard to be the person she has become. Her journey would have been much harder, however, without the support of people who love her and the professionals who provide her health care.

Bills such as HB 2791 don't really exist to solve a problem. The medical professionals who regularly work with transgender youth already follow well-research, science-based treatment protocols. Those protocols were developed based on 100s of studies with 1000s of transgender individuals and are designed to provide needed, life-saving care.

Bills like HB 2791 only exist to stoke fear and raise doubt about the legitimacy of transgender health care and even the very existence of transgender people. There is no reason for our state legislators to insert themselves into private medical decisions that should be made only by patients, their families, and their healthcare providers. What knowledge and expertise could they possibly have that patients and medical professionals don't?

Gender affirming care saves lives. Research has proven it, which is why EVERY major medical association, including the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, supports gender-affirming care for transgender youth and opposes bills like HB 2791.

I refuse to think about what could have happened to our daughter if she didn't have access to the care she needed as a teen. I can't think about the pain she could have felt or of the possibility of living in a world without her in it. I simply can't do it and my heart breaks for the parents who might have to face the things I won't have to, should this bill pass.

HB 2791 doesn't solve a problem; it is an attempt to legislate trans people out of existence. It won't be successful, however, even if it passes. Trans people have always been here, they will continue to be here, and our world is better because of them. It's time to stop wasting our state's resources trying to erase trans people and instead build a Kansas where all youth feel welcome and supported.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share my thoughts on HB 2791. I encourage you to support transgender youth and their families and vote no.

HB 2791  
Kyle Hamrick  
Private Citizen  
2/27/2024  
kylasaurus.rex@gmail.com  
Written Only  
Opponent

"Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you for hearing my thoughts on HB 2791 today. My name is Kyle Hamrick and I am a voter in Wyandotte County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on HB 2791"

Decisions of this sort should be made on a case-by-case basis by the patient, their parents or guardians (when desired by the patient), and their doctor.

This bill will single out transgender youth for additional targeting and difficulty, beyond that which they already experience. It is attempting to legislate what is clearly religious-based morality on a statewide basis, without a basis in science or proper understanding of the repercussions it will have on this already vulnerable population.

Medical care for gender dysphoria is evidence-based, medically necessary, and safe. Every major medical organization advocates against bills like this, and this one is especially broadly-written, which is extremely worrisome.

Let's show the nation Kansas values its children - of all kinds.

I thank you all for hearing my and thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of HB 2791.

HB 2791  
Lee Alexander Michota  
PRIVATE CITIZEN  
2/27/2024  
leemichota@gmail.com  
WRITTEN ONLY  
OPPONENT

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Lee Alexander Michota (he/him) and I am a voter in Sedgwick County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791.

This bill entitled The “Forbidding Abusive Child Transitions Act” is both misleading and discriminatory against the children of the transgender community and those further marginalized therein. If we are to embrace the concern of “abuse” towards the minors of our community, I encourage us to strip away the bias and semantics and look at this bill for what it truly is. This is not forbidding any kind of abuse, but rather enabling it. Trans affirming care is life-saving care, and removing the resources necessary for a trans child to thrive and survive is not protecting them, it is endangering them.

I was two years old when I knew I was trans. I felt trapped in my own body and immediately felt I didn't belong. The world around me made damn sure I knew it too. There was, however, a teacher who truly saw me and gave me the permission to exist and to be seen fully just as they were. They thrived when they entered the classroom, showing up for us kids and cultivating a safe space for everyone without judgment. They were fired after they came out that year and I never saw them again. It was the first of many times I thought about killing myself. My safe space was gone and my struggle to fit in increased ten fold. I went to therapy after my second suicide attempt, during puberty and without any access or knowledge of my community or the life saving care that could be provided for me. But therapy was hardly where it is today, looking more like ‘Girl Interrupted’ than the myriad of different astonishing practices helping our trans youth survive today. Sitting here at thirty-seven years old, post surgery, properly balanced, with a support system and community that embraces gender in all its euphoria, I wonder how denying someone this life-saving care is doing what is in their best interest, especially for a child?

I served as a professional educator for over eleven years, some of the trans children I taught were only able to be their authentic selves for one hour a week, sometimes less. Imagine only being able to feel safe for sixty minutes a week, and that was if their parent was able to drop them off. One student feared for their life every time they stepped foot on their high school campus, especially in the bathroom. They expressed their need for hormones, wishing they could claim agency over their body without the fear of it suddenly being taken away. As his teacher and a fellow trans human, I wonder how much safer he would have felt if he had the necessary resources to exist, and how a bill like this jeopardizes that safety for him. Also, with the intentionally vague language of this bill, I fear there will be more educators like me with their hands tied when it comes to providing a safe space for their trans students. It does not define what it means to “promote,” “provide,” or “advocate” for social transition or gender affirming medical care and is clearly discriminatory in language.

So here we have two stories with a common question; a child growing up in 90's suburbia without any knowledge or resources that his community exists, and another trying to navigate modern culture with all of the medication, therapy, surgery and research out there but blocked by a bill created by cisgender individuals that have no idea what it is like to walk a mile in a trans person's shoes. Why does there need to be a threshold of suffering for a trans child to earn the right to feel safe? And what are we truly saying as a society if we are enabling a culture that protects the bullies of trans kids over the ones dying at their hands?

If we are to embrace the idea of gender as a medical health issue, then it must remain in the hands of the individual and medical professionals without the influence of legislation, full stop. Firstly, Bodily autonomy is sacred (a principle made very clear by conservatives during 2020 around vaccinations) and with a bill like this passed, we are taking a dangerous step into a future where "protection" is rooted in control rather than empathy. Secondly, to continue to provide healthcare for "de-transitioning" youth and intersex youth but not trans youth is textbook discrimination. Gender-affirming care is individualized to meet the needs of each patient, managed through a careful and evidence-based model of assessment and informed consent—which is already required by law. Lastly, to intentionally limit the resources of trans youth requiring medicaid, state-funded resources and support paints a very clear picture: this bill is not about protection, it is about prejudice.

In order to move forward, we must remove the bias and fear-mongering language around this bill and give an honest look at the proper research to find out what is really important for protecting our youth, especially our transgender youth. A thinly veiled bill "forbidding abuse" while simultaneously targeting that vulnerable group of individuals, stripping them of resources, and then punishing them is intentional discrimination. To move forward with this bill would be to enable the suffocation of diversity in our youth, and support the complicity of a cultural and moral downfall.

Trans youth activist, Grace Dolan Sandrino said it best, "Trans people are extraordinary, strong, intelligent, persistent and resilient. We have to be. And we will not stand for the picking and choosing of rights. We still have hope." I believe in Grace, and I believe in our community. Please help me believe in a future for our trans children too.

"Once again, I thank you all for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of HB 2791. Thank you."

February 27, 2024

## Testimony to the House Health and Human Services Committee

NAME: **Leslie D. Mark**

TITLE: **Kansas Citizen / Voter**

EMAIL ADDRESS: **ldmark61@gmail.com**

BILL NUMBER: **HB2791, AN ACT forbidding abuse child transitions act, restricting use of state funds to promote gender transitioning, prohibiting healthcare professionals from treating children whose gender identity is inconsistent with the child's sex, authorizing a civil cause of action against healthcare professionals for providing such treatments, authorizing professional discipline against a physician who performs such treatment, prohibiting professional liability insurance from covering damages for healthcare providers that provide gender transition treatment to children and adding violation of the act to the definition of unprofessional conduct for physicians and nurses.**

PROPOSER, OPPOSER, or NEUTRAL: **Opponent**

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: **Written Only**

Dear Chair Landwehr and Members of the Committee,

I appreciate the opportunity to share a personal perspective, which is that **patients, families, and their doctors should have the freedom to make their own private medical decisions—not politicians.**

I don't know how much more plain the good people of Kansas need to get with y'all? These efforts to impose fear-based, non-scientific, restrictions with increased government oversight of private health matters go against every stated value of current KSleg leadership. My family's experiences with gender-affirming care were exemplary of individualized, sensitive, and respectful meeting-the-needs interactions that our young person required. The standard of "evidence-based" assessment and informed consent that was followed is already required by Kansas law!

What are we actually promulgating with bans on ALL gender affirming healthcare, including for those young in state foster care? Why would we mandate FALSEHOODS be spread through fear-based "informed consent" language to parents/guardians? And why on earth would the state want to threaten medical professionals with strict liability lawsuits — and attendant implications for professional licensure and insurance access for those providers?

This is truly anti-people, anti-Kansas, anti-American legislation. Vote NO on HB 2791.



Leslie D. Mark

Mission Hills, HD 25 / Sen 7



HB 2791  
Lillian Fleming  
PRIVATE CITIZEN  
2/26/2024  
fleming.lillian@gmail.com  
WRITTEN ONLY  
OPPONENT

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Lillian Fleming and I am a voter in Johnson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791

This bill directly discriminates against transgender Kansans, injects the legislature into the doctor-patient relationship, and veers into the dangerous territory of violating state employee's free speech rights. Kansas has a proud abolitionist history, one based directly on recognizing the humanity in all people. This bill is a direct affront to that history.

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of HB 2791. Thank you.

HB 2791  
Linda M Collier  
Private Citizen  
2/27/2024  
Lindamcollier33@gmail.com  
Written only  
Opponent

Chairman Landwehr and other Committee members, thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts on HB2791. I'm a Johnson County voter strongly encouraging you to vote NO on HB2791.

I'm a retired teacher who's taught several transgender youth and know personally how important appropriate medical and psychological care is for these children.

Gender-affirming care is life-saving care...that's not an exaggeration. Medical care for gender dysphoria is evidence-based, medically necessary, and safe—which is why every major medical association advocates against bills like this.

Patients, families, and their doctors should have the freedom to make their own private medical decisions—not politicians. Gender-affirming care is individualized to meet the needs of each patient, managed through a careful and evidence-based model of assessment and informed consent—which is already required by law.

As a lawyer, I'm concerned that the bill is written so broadly that it could have significant additional harmful consequence beyond gender affirming healthcare. The bill does not define what it means to "promote," "provide," or "advocate" for social transition or gender affirming medical care—meaning not only will mental and medical health professionals be impacted by this bill, but it could also disrupt school counselors, teachers, daycare providers, etc., who interact with trans youth. The language of the bill clearly discriminates against transgender Kansans and raises constitutional concerns about state employee's free speech rights.

Once again, I respectfully urge you to vote no on the passage of HB2791. Thank you.

HB 2791  
Lisa Marin  
Private citizen  
2/27/2024  
lisa.marin@mac.com  
Written only  
Opponent

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Lisa Marin and I am a voter in Johnson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791"

I have a child with gender dysphoria who was self harming. After receiving gender affirming care, their suicidal ideation and self harm stopped. Gender affirming care saved their life,

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of HB 2791. Thank you.

Private Citizen  
02-27-24  
liz.hamor@centerofdaring.com

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thanks for the opportunity to share my thoughts on HB 2791. My name is Liz Hamor. I'm a suburban soccer mom and business owner in Goddard. Some of you may know me from previous years advocating in opposition of bills similar to this one. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on HB 2791.

I've been an advocate with LGBTQ+ youth in Kansas for a decade, and I've watched as anti-trans bills have increased the hostility that LGBTQ+ youth face in their schools, homes, and communities.

You all have the power to set the tone for how Kansans will be treated. Many of you will state holding values of kindness, respect, and even love, but supporting these bills, allowing the dehumanizing rhetoric around them to have a platform in the Capitol, and the stochastic terrorism that is a result is anything but kind, respectful, or loving.

The dictionary defines "stochastic terrorism" as "the public demonization of a person or group resulting in the incitement of a violent act, which is statistically probable but whose specifics cannot be predicted: The lone-wolf attack was apparently influenced by the rhetoric of stochastic terrorism."

What happened to Nex Benedict was a preventable TRAGEDY. (Nex was a nonbinary teen in Oklahoma who was recently brutally assaulted in their school bathroom and died shortly after.) What happened to Nex was also a statistically probable outcome of the stochastic terrorism that is unleashed on innocent children when lawmakers debate these children's existence, humanity and rights.

The bills passed last year have certainly added to the hostility that my friends and youth with whom I advocate have faced. I know several families with a trans member who have moved out of Kansas since last year. Many will state that the increasing hostility feels like state-sanctioned violence. What else are young trans kids, trans adults, and their families and friends supposed to think when watching and listening to you debate their existence, their humanity, and their rights, especially when you're placing these topics over issues that \*actually\* greatly affect ALL Kansans?

It's a matter of time before a stochastic-terrorism-fueled preventable tragedy occurs in Kansas, and any lawmakers who vote for these bills that are based on animus will be culpable in the long gaze of history. History will not kindly remember the legislators who vote for HB 2791, which is a vote to discriminate and further dehumanize transgender Kansans. I encourage you to vote NO on HB 2791. Thank you.

Private Citizen  
02-27-24  
lucasjohnj04@gmail.com

First off thank you Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee for giving me the time to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Lucas John and I am a voter in Sedgwick County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791.

As a transgender individual myself (FtM), I am strongly against this Bill. Transgender kids/teens go through so much just on their own. Dysphoria, for those who don't understand the feeling, at a "tween" age without the help of hormone blockers is like being inside of a prison cage watching yourself turn and transform into something you weren't expecting, or at least something that you never wanted to happen, but you had no control over. In simple terms, imagine just wanting to rip apart your own skin 24/7. Trans youths are going through that every day without the help of gender-affirming care. These kids and teens are just trying to be themselves, to feel at home in their own skin and if the committee believes that in enforcing this bill it will "protect" or "save" these youths from themselves, I will have to say, with all due respect, you are delusional. Transgender youths already have a higher chance of depression, anxiety disorders and suicidal ideation. Enforcing this bill is taking not only their basic human rights for care away, but you would also be taking away their lives. Transgender youths are human just like the rest of us and deserve to be cared for. They deserve their gender-affirming care, and I will tell you that most trans youths have gone through some extensive therapy just to say they are trans not even for gender-affirming care because that is a whole other loop to get through. Don't make this harder for these kids/teens to just live.

Again, I thank you all for hearing my thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote No to bill HB 2791. Thank you.

Representative Brenda Landwehr, Chair  
Kansas House Committee on Health and Human Services

HB 2791  
Thursday, February 29, 2024  
1:30 PM

**IN OPPOSITION**

Dear Madam Chairperson,

My name is Mara Blake. I am a resident of Olathe, Kansas. I am testifying against HB 2791.

I am in opposition to this bill not only as a citizen of Kansas, but as a mother to a non-binary child. This bill claims to protect children, when in reality it will potentially cause great harm to a marginalized group. Forbidding children from receiving medical treatment because of their gender identity can only cause harm. This bill seeks to bully children through policy, by denying them important medical treatment and prohibiting doctors from doing their jobs.

LGBT+ children are already marginalized, and are often the victims of violence and discrimination. A 2023 article posted in the journal *Healthcare*, titled “Prevalence and Detriments of Depressive and Anxiety Symptoms Among Transgender People: Results of a Survey” stated that 40% of transgender people suffer from depression and already have little access to medical assistance for it. A staggering 20% of transgender students had attempted suicide in the previous 12 months of the survey. The 2022 study published in *JAMA Network Open* (“Mental Health Outcomes in Transgender and Nonbinary Youths Receiving Gender Affirming Care”) showed that youths who did not initiate puberty blockers or did not receive gender-affirming medical interventions had a two to three-fold increase in depression and suicidality as compared to those who did receive treatment. Research clearly shows that providing children with access to gender-affirming medical care increases their well-being, decreasing depression and suicidality. That is how to protect children.

HB 2791 is not only harmful to children, but is a huge overreach of government into the private medical treatment of Kansas children. Such a bill inserts political agendas into a space where only a medical provider, patient, family, and science should be. This bill forces discriminatory beliefs of one party into the practical and very real world of medicine.

Should HB 2791 be enacted, it will have detrimental effects on all of Kansas. Not only will LGBT+ people be further marginalized, but it would insert hate at policy level. We have seen recently in Oklahoma that policies of hate can embolden and inspire people to real-life acts of violence.

HB 2791 threatens the health and safety of Kansas children, and thereby, that of Kansas families. Such families are likely to abandon this state to seek medical care in a place that does

not interfere and overreach into their private family and medical concerns. They will sell their homes, find new jobs, and become tax-paying citizens of their new state. They will not send their children to college here, or encourage others that Kansas is a good place to call home. My family will likely be one of these. Kansas will lose a senior electrical engineer, a substitute elementary teacher, and three amazing children with bright futures. My husband and I grew up here. We received our Bachelor's from KU and my husband is about to finish his master's program at K-State. We have roots here. But we will pull them up for safer pastures should the ideas in HB 2791 become policy. All of our children deserve access to the healthcare they need. Needs that should be determined by a medical professional and family, not the state.

In conclusion, I urge you to reject HB 2791 and its hate-filled rhetoric disguised as abuse prevention. By enacting this bill, Kansas government would be interfering in personal, family, and medical matters. State government has no business denying children healthcare that has been proven to increase positive mental health outcomes and save lives. I want to thank the Committee for hearing my concerns as a citizen and parent, and I urge them to oppose HB 2791.

Thank you for your time,

Mara Blake

HB 2791  
Margaret Schinstock  
Private Citizen  
2/22/2024  
moletta80@gmail.com  
Written Only  
Opponent

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Margaret Schinstock and I am a voter in Sedgwick County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791

As a citizen of the state of Kansas, and America at large, I find this bill distressing for several reasons, from multiple angles. Firstly, I think it is incredibly important to protect all children. I think we especially should protect those children who by virtue of their identity are more likely to be abused or attacked by society. This includes those children that identify as trans or non-binary. They face many struggles that I, as a cis woman, will never encounter. I may extend empathy to them, but I will never walk their path. With the difficulties that come in life simply for being different from the status quo, must we inflict undue adversity upon them and put up roadblocks to their care? I think it is important that medical care decisions are made between the person involved, their parents or caregivers, and medical providers. This bill is the very opposite of any small government ideology that conservative politicians try to profess. This is incredibly intrusive and antithetical to ideas of freedom and parental rights. Parents have the right to choose medical providers and treatments for their children. They have the right to support their children. Gender-affirming care saves lives. Trans youth who have access to care are 73% less likely to be suicidal, according to a 2022 American Medical Association study. There are stacks of evidence that show gender affirming care is safe and valid healthcare. It is tailored on an individual basis, and guided under the care of medical professionals.

This bill is written poorly, and leaves itself open to broad interpretation. It does not define or limit what it means to "promote," "provide," or "advocate" for social transition or gender affirming medical care. It could also be as easy as no longer dead naming someone. Are we going to eventually work it into a law that we can only go by names on birth certificates? Because every Mike and Bobby becoming Michael and Robert seems extreme. I am not addressed by the name on my birth certificate. People are often surprised to find my name is Margaret, because no one calls me that. But if it's found that calling someone transitioning by their chosen name is promoting or advocating for their gender affirming care, that is the path we may be on.

What is the genesis of this bill? What is the reasoning behind it? Why is someone working so hard to stop this minority of people from having the medical care they seek? Is it due to the faith of the authors and supporters of the bill? Do they find trans people at odds with their interpretation of the Bible? To those people, I say this: you are allowed to feel that way. You are allowed to personally dislike every trans person by virtue of the life you and they are living. You may sneer at them in the grocery store, and roll your eyes at the idea of them. That's your freedom, as an American and as a person. You may not try and legislate them out of existence. Whatever faith you have chosen to follow does not get to make the laws of this state or this country, as your faith is not representative of



everyone. It's built right into The First Amendment. Trans people existed before the Bible. They will continue to exist. Attempts to criminalize said existence only causes harm.

Once again, thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to give my thoughts about this bill. Please vote no of the passage of HB 2791.

## Testimony for HB 2791

Dear Representatives,

Today I am writing you as a strong proponent for the passing of HB 2791, to protect minors from dangerous, experimental and life destroying cosmetic surgeries for children experiencing gender dysphoria AND the thousands more that are NOT clinically dysphoric but have been swept up in a well funded propaganda machine that stands to make billions off of the surgeries that inevitably will result in multiple revisions over the course of a lifetime.

This wholly unethical industry has NO CLUE what the outcomes will be for the millions of mentally confused individuals who have been convinced that high doses of hormones and surgery are the only recourse to alleviate their perceived distress.

Every child goes through some level of distress during adolescence.

Every child feels unsure of their changing bodies. Is surgery and drugs the way we help the natural uncomfortableness of growing up? When did we start diagnosing puberty as something to be treated? It is the most important period of development in a person's life and we are being told it needs to be surgically removed.

And the lie that puberty blockers are REVERSIBLE is utterly laughable and completely untrue. A person's window of sexual development comes ONCE in a person's lifetime. It will not be "temporarily stopped" and expected to simply return on demand. That is not how human development works. And WE KNOW THIS, but somehow are willing to turn a blind eye to decades of developmental research? For what? Because we think this is compassion??? How is lying to a child about the life they will live, enduring complications, bone loss, pancreatic dysfunction, disrupted brain development, kidney damage, fissures, strictures, bowel and bladder dysfunction and that's just to name a few, compassionate?. We have ZERO long term studies that show the outcomes of these new and experimental procedures. We must be willing to disappoint a very few people in order to save thousands of lives.

YOU will need to decide what side of this you want to have your name on. I have included a link to a Reddit group of detransitioners. I truly hope you peruse the horrific stories before you cast your vote. They are absolutely heart wrenching. Here is one, the very first one at the top of the page today:

I'm 6 months pregnant and it's been really getting to me that I can't breastfeed because of a decision I made under extreme duress at 19 years old. Honestly you could say I made the decision at 13 years old and never questioned it for 6 years but whatever. I wish that I had the tools or had been given the tools to actually try and think about the long term consequences of amputating a body part like that.

At the time of my surgery, I claimed that I was open to having a child but honestly my thought processes were so crazy back then it's amazing that all of my doctors just affirmed affirmed affirmed and pushed me further and further down the dysphoria spiral. At the time, I was convinced that if I didn't get plastic surgery I would kill myself. Now I know that's not true. I could have gotten help, I could have helped myself but I discouraged myself and was discouraged by all of the people I surrounded myself with.

I went no contact with the woman who was basically my foster mother when I detransitioned and I feel a lot of guilt about that decision sometimes but now I know for a fact that she did not really care about my well-being or my future or my sanity or anything but making herself feel woke for taking in a “queer trans homeless youth of color” or whatever like I was a stray cat. I pushed my family away when all they wanted to do was help me. I mean, I randomly announced that I was born incorrectly. Who in their right mind would go along with something like that? Especially coming from a 13 year old girl?

I’ve accepted my position and I’m grateful to have access to formula and clean drinking water but GOD. It’s so painful knowing I’ve lost the chance to bond with my daughter in such a meaningful way. I know that one day I might have to talk to her about why I chose to amputate my breasts and I just have no clue what I will say to her.

**This is just one example. There are 52 thousand members of that sub/Reddit group. That story was mild compared to the bodily destruction I’ve seen in others. Yes, seen. Photos of mutilated genitalia, scar tissue that restricts normal range of motion, colostomy bags due to perforated colons during surgery. It is a bloodbath and still there is contemplation that THIS is the right path forward for people who need mental health help.**

**This is not the way to help people. I know you will undoubtedly receive pleas from parents vowing their children would have perished without this brand of abuse. They are mistaken and perhaps need some assistance themselves. Putting your child on the operating table to treat something that is going on in their heads is, in my opinion, akin to abuse. I know that is thrown around a lot, but think about it. The only other time in human history we tried to treat a mental disorder with a medical procedure was through lobotomy. And that was outlawed due to its unscientific and horrific ramifications. We cannot bring back a modern version of the lobotomy. It will cripple an entire generation of children.**

**You have an opportunity. The most important opportunity your political career may ever see. An opportunity to save children from a predatory medical complex that puts money before people and ushers in the most destructive lie ever perpetrated on human beings; you were “born in the wrong body”. No one was born in the wrong body. You have distress about something in your life and instead help you navigate this distress, we will just cut it out of you. Cut out your “feelings cancer”. You cannot treat feelings with surgery. And we shouldn’t allow so-called “doctors” to try by using our youth as the ultimate guinea pigs. Thank you for your time. I will be monitoring the vote. Ultimately people who allowed this to go on will be held accountable. I pray you will make the right choice.**

**Marianne Hoffman**

**Douglas County, KS.**

**<https://www.reddit.com/r/detrans/>**



HB 2791  
Marshall Walters  
Private Citizen  
2/27/2024  
mwalters4302@gmail.com  
Written Only  
Opponent

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you for listening and giving me time to share my thoughts on HB 2791. My name is Marshall Walters and I am a voter in Ellis County. I'm writing today to urge the committee to vote no on HB 2791.

I am of the firm belief that medical care, especially lifesaving gender affirming care that has been proven to be safe and effective, should be decided between patients and health care professionals. The state has no right to make decisions regarding an individual's health, and frankly I cannot imagine this sort of legislation ever being enacted on cisgender people, who in fact also receive gender affirming care in many circumstances. There are already many barriers and safeguards in place for transgender youth who want to pursue gender affirming healthcare, and I believe that this bill disregards that in favor of broad, nonspecific, and blatantly discriminatory restrictions that will do nothing but hurt transgender youth, and further ostracize our transgender community. This bill does not clearly specify or define what it means to promote or advocate for social transition or gender affirming care and raises concerns for state employee's rights to freedom of speech. As a transgender Kansas citizen who has already lost multiple rights to discriminatory bills like this, I believe that every Kansas youth deserves to feel safe here and is entitled access to lifesaving, necessary healthcare.

I want to thank you again for your time, and for listening to my thoughts on this bill, and I strongly encourage you to vote no on the passage of HB 2791. Thank you.

Private citizen  
02-27-24  
Matthewfggolden@gmail.com

Chairman Landwehr & Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Matthew Golen and I am a voter in Johnson County. I am a resident of Leawood in House District 20 and am opposed to this bill.

For those who are pro-life, gender-affirming care is life-saving, medically necessary, and evidence-based care for those with gender dysphoria. For that reason, every medical association argues against bills such as these. It is important to follow medical advice when we are making laws for the practice of medicine.

For those who are against government intervention, especially in healthcare, this bill argues for governmental tyranny. Gender-affirming care is individualized care to meet people where they are. It is managed through a careful & evidence-based model of assessment & informed consent. Patients, & their doctors should be able to make private medical decisions free from politicians.

The broad reach of this bill has significant harmful consequences beyond gender-affirming care. This bill does not define "promote", "provide", or "advocate," thus disrupting the life of anyone who interacts with trans youth, including teachers, school counselors, & daycare providers. In sum, the language of this bill discriminates against transgender Kansans & raises constitutional concerns about Kansans' free speech rights.

Instead of threatening & controlling children, parents, doctors, nurses, teachers, school counselors, & daycare workers, please focus on taking care of the rights of Kansans. All Kansans should be able to live & work without feeling unsafe. This bill does the exact opposite. If you are against government mandates & threats, please vote against this bill. Thank you for your consideration.

HB 2791  
Megan Roberts  
Private citizen  
2/22/2024  
Megz3287@gmail.com  
WRITTEN ONLY  
OPPONENT

Thank you for considering my position on HB 2791. I am a voter and mother of a Trans person in Sedgwick County. If you are in any way persuaded by your constituents and the state of us as a people in general, you will vote No on HB 2791.

The way that this is positioned is too broad to protect youth but yet will harm them. My child goes to a therapist that is very open to affirming their identity as a Trans person. I can understand not being "for" surgery for minors but this is too broadly stated to limit it to just that and would harm our youth and our future. Block HB 2791. If you feel there are medical reasons for this bill, then block this and refine it to not promote hate in the safest of environments like therapy. Please. Thanks for hearing me out.

I cannot wait to show my child, that is nearly of voting age, that our voice matters on this subject of HB 2791. Thank you for listening.

# LOUD LIGHT CIVIC ACTION

Melissa Stiehler  
Loud Light Civic Action  
Written Opponent Testimony of HB 2791  
For the House Health and Human Services Committee

February 29, 2023

Chair Landwehr and members of the Committee,

Thank you so much for the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Melissa Stiehler, and I serve as Advocacy Director of Loud Light Civic Action, a Kansas based, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that supports and builds the civic engagement and leadership of young people in our state. Loud Light Civic Action unapologetically supports the LGBTQ+ community, including their right to self-determination and access to life saving medical care without government interference. It is with these values that Loud Light Civic Action strongly opposes HB 2791.

## **Concern: Government Restrictions on Kansans' Freedom of Self Determination**

One of the most fundamental values of a free society is its people being able to shape their own life without interference or discrimination from their government. HB 2791 is a classic example of a violation of Kansans' Right to Self-Determination. Efforts like HB 2791 are blunt attempts to "legislate away" transgender Kansans by creating expansive government interference in both medical and social transitioning. Simply put, it is not the government's business to mandate these things. Interference like this will make for a less free society for all Kansans.

## **Concern: Ignores Parental Rights**

HB 2791 effectively bans all gender affirming medical care, regardless of scientific evidence, regardless of individual circumstance, and regardless of the will of the child's parents. Many members of the legislature and of this very committee have concerned themselves deeply with parental rights. This bill would strip loving, informed parents of their right to make the best medical choices for their child. It is insulting that the title of this bill refers to gender affirming care as abuse, when parents just want to provide the best care for their child. The extremism shown in this legislation is ignorant of medical best practices and of healthy, loving families of transgender children.

## **Concern: Government Mandated Discrimination by State Agencies**

HB 2791 mandates that any individual, entity, medical provider, employee or building receiving state funding shall not "promote or advocate" for any version of gender affirming care, including socially transitioning. Social transitioning to mean any acts outside of medical care to present differently than the sex assigned at birth, including manner of dress. Not only will this undefined, broad legislation inevitably lead to discriminatory practices, but it is entirely unenforceable. Will the statehouse stop allowing girls to wear pants? What about boys who have grown their hair long, and how long is too long? Can teachers no longer call a student named "Samantha" by the nickname of "Sam" if she so prefers? It's insulting to the



people of Kansas that this is a conversation that is even being entertained by their lawmakers at all. Passing this bill into law would be a deeply irresponsible abuse of your powers as lawmakers.

**Concern: Places Government Barriers to the Fundamental Right of Bodily Autonomy**

While the constitutionally guaranteed right of bodily autonomy has been something many members of the legislature have openly disparaged, it is still the law of the land and the right of our people. HB 2791 is yet another attempt to disregard personal autonomy in favor of mandated misinformation and medical bans. The mandatory “informed consent” requirements are not based on accurate, evidence based science or medical best practices. These medical procedures are banned only for transgender children, while cisgender children are able to and currently receive access to the exact same care without government interference. Puberty blockers, hormone replacement therapy, and gender affirming medical care are far more commonly prescribed to cisgender minors than they are to transgender minors, yet that is not for debate in this bill. If the true concern is the medical impact of these procedures on children, then why is the legislature not concerned with the medical impact for *all* children?

**For these reasons, Loud Light Civic Action strongly urges members of this committee to oppose HB 2791**, and urges the legislature to please, leave transgender children and their families alone. It is not in the best interest for the state to place themselves in the middle of decisions best left to a patient, their parents, and their doctor. Thank you all for your time and I hope you take my testimony into consideration.



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February 29, 2024

Michael Poppa  
Executive Director  
contact@mainstream.vote

House Committee on Health and Human Services  
Chair, Rep. Brenda Landwehr

Re: Opposition Testimony, Written-only  
HB2791—"Enacting the forbidding abuse child transitions act, restricting use of state funds to promote gender transitioning..."

Chair Landwehr and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written opposition testimony on HB2791. Fortunately, I am able to hand-deliver the five (5) hardcopies required by the chair. Unfortunately, that is not the case with all Kansans wishing to participate in the democratic process, and their voices go unheard. Respectfully, I urge you to consider updating the committee testimony guidelines to remove the unnecessary mandate for hardcopies. As elected officials, it is expected that you would champion the greatest level of public participation.

**Mainstream opposes HB2791.** Whether or not it was the original intent, this bill clearly discriminates in healthcare against transgender Kansans. And as we all know, most if not all discriminatory acts and beliefs are rooted in a subjective theological worldview.

Mainstream supports the constitutional guarantee of the separation of religion and government which protects the right of all Kansans to practice the faith of their choice, or none at all. We believe strongly that there is no place for government to impede the practice of one's faith, nor for religion to govern the people. HB2791 dangerously seeks to undermine science and established healthcare standards and instead govern Kansans religion on the basis of belief, not practice.

And while this bill may appear to only target access to medically necessary care for transgender people under 18, the language is so broad that it could have significant additional harmful consequences. HB2791 does not define what it means to "promote," "provide," or "advocate" for social transition or gender affirming medical care. This means that not only will mental and medical health professionals be impacted by this bill, but it could also disrupt the lives of others who interact with trans youth, including but not limited to school counselors, teachers and daycare providers.

Everyone has a right to access healthcare without discrimination and government overreach. Private, medically necessary health care decisions should be kept solely between the impacted individual(s), their health professionals and, if appropriate, their faith leader.

**Mainstream urges you to reject HB2791. Please do not turn personal, private healthcare decisions into partisan political tactics.**

I am Mikela Bonner. My pronouns are she/her. I have written this to encourage you to halt the progression of HB2791, a bill that threatens the lives transgender youth and adults alike. The scientific consensus is overwhelmingly in support of gender-affirming care, and I hope this personal account may help you understand one transition, and how much it has managed to make an impact.

I received my result of the first of several licensing exams all medical students face to become physicians in the United States on October 4, 2017. My score was 10 points away from passing, and on that day my dream to become a physician began to die. There is only one memory of that day that carries any positivity. It was the first day I took a tablet of Estradiol. This was the first day of treatment for a medical need that had been growing since 1995, when I was 3 years old and had the vague feeling that something about me was different than the other girls. Throughout high school and undergrad, I played the part of a very successful young man, and as I was in the closet, I was always weighed down by an amalgamation of symptoms that I would one day learn is called gender dysphoria and gender dysmorphia.

While in medical school at KU, I began to reach out to the LGBTQIA+ community in Kansas City and was able to start expressing my true self to a group of close friends. This group told me multiple times that every time I had to hide myself in the disguise of a cisgender boy that they could see my soul die inside my eyes. I learned that I was only ever happy when the world saw me for the woman I am rather than the boy I pretended to be. Multiple therapists agreed that my experiences were consistent with gender dysphoria and that I should seek the appropriate, evidence-based medical care for this condition: transition.

Within 5 days of that first tablet of estradiol, a mental "fog" had cleared. The world itself seemed more colorful, alive, and at peace than before. Eventually, physical changes came that created the first gender euphoria I had ever felt and mixed with the indescribable happiness I also felt a bitter resentment: I had spent *decades* missing a comfort cisgender people largely take for granted. Further, not accessing the healthcare I needed played a significant role in destroying what had been my dream. I ultimately withdrew from medical school and returned home, struggling to find my way in the world so that I could still practice in healthcare, but I had one thing going for me: I was no longer constrained by hiding my true self.

I became a registered nurse with a reputation as a ferocious patient advocate who has practiced in emergency settings and now in primary care. Our clinic has patients seeking gender-affirming care and they come to us struggling to fulfil their dreams, their eyes dull and devoid of life. They remind me of how I felt prior to my own transition. By accessing the overwhelmingly supported treatment for gender dysphoria, these patients come to life just as I did. Our clinic tracks a number of mental health symptoms utilizing robust surveys and routine office visits to monitor our patients' progress and we consistently see a reduction in symptoms of anxiety and depression along with increased success as described by these patients. I do not find this to be surprising; my own experiences and the research regarding gender-affirming care show overwhelmingly that this is the experience of the majority of transgender people receiving this evidence-based care. These studies show the tangible benefits in reduction of distress and incredible levels of satisfaction with transition. In some studies the rate of satisfaction with gender-affirming care over time can exceed 97% of the study population. For reference, the patient satisfaction rates for heart transplant surgeries typically hover between 80% to 87%. These studies also show that gender identity is quite firm by age 5 for most humans, although many cisgender people are less aware of this as they have largely always had identity congruence. These studies are not only supporting gender-affirming care, they definitively state that trans people need access to the appropriate healthcare from a very young age.

The support by the medical establishment regarding gender-affirming care is definitive. Professional practice organizations from the American Medical Association to the American Nursing Association to the American Academy of Pediatrics to the World Health Organization and many more all

speak firmly of their support for gender-affirming care because the evidence of its effectiveness is overwhelming. This evidence-based approach to caring for gender dysphoria is no different to the development of evidence-based approaches to caring for any number of other health needs such as hypertension. The same kind of rigorous and continuing scrutiny of the evidence used to create “gold standards” of care that is applied to treating hypertension are used to create the “gold standard” for the treatment of gender dysphoria, and the most commonly used standard of care is available for public viewing through the website of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, otherwise known as WPATH.

There is much fear in the current discourse about “regret” amongst trans people if they transition. Much like with the concerns Andrew Wakefield misrepresented in the 1990’s and early 2000’s when he tried to link MMR vaccination with autism with the ulterior motive of enriching vaccine manufacturers and his subsequent disgrace and revocation of his right to practice medicine, the overwhelming “concern” we see from the anti-trans movement is at best misguided and worst actively seeking to cause harm. Time and again the few studies that claim high rates of “detransition” or “desistance” are considered poorly designed due to small sample sizes, non-specific definitions regarding any sort of regret, and lack of appropriate follow-up and analysis of results. Authors of some of these studies such as Thomas Steensma have even come out to say their studies are frequently being misrepresented and corrupted to fit anti-trans narratives rather than seeking to understand one particular phenomenon that some trans people face.

The main source of dissatisfaction among transgender individuals comes from societal hostility to our existence, something bills such as HB2791 and HB2792 are actively fostering. Children are dying after getting beaten up at school, black trans women in the US have an average life expectancy of 35 years. To use the words of Michael Knowles at CPAC 2023, the goal is to “eradicate” trans people. In January of 2024, journalist Erin Reed reported on audio clips from Ohio and Michigan from meetings of Republican legislators where discussion of the “endgame” of these kinds of bills was openly stated and caught on recorders: the eradication of all gender-affirming healthcare for ALL transgender people. To use the words of Republicans: eradication. Villains who twirl their mustaches and wring their hats are easy to spot. Those who come cloaked in words of concern and actions of “protecting” some by harming others are well-cloaked and dangerous when they worm their way into positions of power.

This is not something I chose, it’s not some hat I wear on a whim. Why would I throw away so much, and risk losing *everything* on something that is not integral to my very being and existence as a human? Why would I *choose* to have to deal with bills like this and politicians looking for a modicum of power who choose to attack a basic right of people like me? Being trans is not what I do, it’s a fundamental part of my being. Restriction of healthcare against trans children or adults does nothing to stop people from being born trans, it just makes life that much harder for us. Ignoring the overwhelming evidence in support of gender-affirming care is as ridiculous as people pretending that caring for hypertension can’t possibly lead to longer and higher quality of life. I hope you do not prove the current overwhelming feeling amongst trans people that the cruelty of these bills and the distress they cause are the actual aim of the bills in the first place. I hope cruelty is not something you would choose to endorse and empower. I hope you take a moment to humbly realize that when the overwhelming medical consensus of experts across the planet advocate for gender-affirming care, that it is hubris to assume you know better than those professionals and the patients they are helping. The science is on our side. The anecdotal experience is on our side. The fundamentals of basic human decency are on our side. So I ask you one question: are you?

HB 2791  
Molly Patton  
Private citizen  
2/27/2024  
mpatton1991@gmail.com  
Written only  
opponent

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you for taking the time to hear my thoughts on HB 2791 today. My name is Molly Patton, and I am a voter living in Sedgwick County. I'm writing today to ask the committee to vote no on HB 2791.

Even though I am a cisgender woman who does not work with any trans children, I believe this bill will cause irreparable harm to the people living in Kansas. The language of the bill is broad with no clear definitions on what is considered "promoting" or "advocating" social or medical transition. This lack of clarity when combined with the bill's long list of punishments seems as though it would be easy to abuse this bill, using it to target or harass medical professionals for perceived slights regardless of whether they violated the law. HB 2791 will create an environment of fear for our Kansas healthcare providers if enacted, and that fear will cripple their ability to successfully provide medical care to the state's children. A therapist will be unable to freely speak with a minor struggling with their identity for fear the conversation alone will be seen as "promoting" a transition. Although the bill leaves exemptions for intersex minors, the severity of HB 2791 means that they are likely to go untreated if their doctor is afraid to run the tests necessary to correctly diagnose their condition. This kind of healthcare is very personal and individualized – allowing this bill to become law limits the freedoms of not just children, but their parents and guardians as well, to be able to make informed decisions regarding healthcare.

The first time I encountered a transgender person, I was a minor myself. One of my best friends in middle school told me they were trans. I knew about his identity before any medical professional, our teachers, or even his parents. Once they found out, they allowed him to explore this feeling by trying out a new name and cutting his hair. In high school, with these simple changes alone, he was able to come into his own as a person. Today, my friend is married and enjoys a successful career in the sciences. It terrifies me to think where he would be now if he had been denied the ability to outwardly express who he was – how differently his life would look if he had to wait until the age of eighteen even for something as simple as teachers calling him by a more masculine name. I think his life would be shifted for the worse. Could he have graduated college, or even high school? Would he have lived to make it to those milestone ages to try?

By being allowed to express himself and transition, my friend was able to be his best self and be an important, productive piece of our society. We must give our children today the same opportunity, and we will strip them of that chance if this bill passes. Gender affirming care saves lives and gives individuals a chance to flourish. This includes all of us, not just trans people. There comes a point in every person's life when they want to go outside of their preconceived gender norm for social or medical reasons, even if it's as small as a dad letting his young daughter paint his nails or a cisgender woman who could treat her Ehlers-Danos Syndrome by taking low doses of testosterone.

Is that abuse or “advocating” for social transition? By calling transition of a trans person ‘child abuse’, HB 2791 damages the state of Kansas at every level.

Thank you for hearing my thoughts on this bill and for listening to my story. Please vote no on the passage of HB 2791.

Private citizen  
02-27-24  
monroe.hanson13@gmail.com

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for your time and consideration. My name is Monroe Hanson, I am a voter in Douglas County and resident of Lawrence, KS. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2792.

Puberty blockers have been used to treat precocious puberty in children since the 1980s, and were approved by the FDA in 1993. Puberty blockers have been proven to be safe and effective as a way to press pause on puberty until an appropriate time for puberty to occur and when someone is able to make an informed decision about their body and their healthcare.

"Statistics show us that LGBTQ+ youth are 120% more likely to experience homelessness and that 41% have considered suicide within the past year. Statistics also show that 1 in 3 LGBTQ+ youth have reported poor mental health due to legislation and policies that threaten their safety and a lack of access to care." Our children do need help; they need protecting. Bills like HB 2792 do not protect our children, they do immense & considerable harm. Our children deserve to be children, without the arm of the state punishing their existence. Gender affirming care is life saving. Save lives by voting no on HB 2792.

We are now living in 2 Americas. An America where it is safe to be trans in public. Where we can use the restroom at a restaurant. Where we can access life saving healthcare. Where we can update our legal documents to reflect who we are and how we live our lives. Where we are accepted at work and at school and our opportunities are not limited. Where our children can freely be children, can access the services they need, can participate in school sports, activities, trips, can be called the correct name and pronouns that helps them want to keep living. And an America where none of this is the case. An America where a 16 year old indigenous child is beat to death by their classmates in the bathroom that state law required them to use. An America where we are legally erased. An America where we are denied life saving healthcare. An America where we are not allowed to tell our stories, to exist in public, to merely use a public restroom. Lifelong residents, newcomers, individuals, partners, and families have already had to make the difficult choice to leave their home, to leave Kansas, in order to access the services that they or their child(ren) need. Wonderful people will continue to leave our state in the face of this discrimination. And wonderful people will stay and suffer and resist. Please do your part to reduce the suffering in this world. Let us live here.

In closing, I implore you, Chairman, and all esteemed members of the committee, to stand up for and with us and vote no on HB 2792. Let Kansas move forward with love and care for our children. Gender affirming care is scientifically sound, proven to be safe and effective, and is life saving healthcare. You can choose to make Kansas a place that people can live with dignity, where they can thrive and build a home and a future. I implore you to protect our future; vote No on HB 2792.



**February 29, 2024**

**Bill number HB 2791**

**Opponent**

**Nicholas Simpson**

**Self**

Chairwoman Brenda Landwehr and Distinguished members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Nicholas Simpson and I am a registered Republican voter in Lawrence, Kansas.

I am asking the committee not to pass this legislation because it would prevent therapists and other health professionals from giving inclusive mental health advice to transgender Kansans without outing them to parents who may be abusive at home. Many of my peers when I was in high school relied on mental health professionals because their parents had thrown them out of their homes or been otherwise abusive due to their identities. These teens would have nowhere to go if this bill were passed.

Social transition is entirely reversible and does not harm young Kansans. If a transgender teenager in Kansas were struggling during their social transition, this bill could prevent mental health professionals from giving the teenager useful coping mechanisms or hopeful social transition stories in fear of prosecution.

This bill is a big government overreach in Kansans' lives that would leave transgender teens more susceptible to isolation and abuse, not less.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I urge you not to pass HB 2791.

Best,

Nicholas Simpson

HB2791  
ORLANDA ALONSO HERRERA  
Private Citizen  
2/25/2024  
orlisonso@gmail.com  
WRITTEN ONLY  
OPPONENT

Dear Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee,  
I am grateful for the opportunity to share my thoughts on HB 2791. My name is Orlanda Alonso, a voter residing in Wyandotte County. I am writing today to urge the committee to vote AGAINST HB 2791.

As you know, our country faces a wave that threatens human dignity. In the name of protecting children from medical abuse, the fundamental right of the human being and the first article of our constitution is being attacked: Our right to pursue happiness.

I have been working with the LGBTQ+ community for approximately two years, and so far, I have never seen a trans person proselytize or try to convince someone to become transgender. On the contrary, what I have seen in transgender people who have had the opportunity to make their transition under the proper medical care is plenitude and happiness to live their own lives while feeling comfortable in their own skin and image.

You as representatives and us, the citizens are more than familiar with the alarming increase in cases of suicide, depression, and anxiety that many of our children, adolescents, and also adults experience due to not being able to express their emotional needs and live the life they want because of fear of rejection. This is a public health case that costs us millions of dollars each year. If you have consulted the research done by mental health experts, you will find that many of these cases are linked to gender identity. Deny these adolescents the possibility of choosing and making a transition under proper medical supervision is deny them the opportunity to live the life they want and be an active part of the community with their new identity. Denying them this right not only attacks their human dignity but also costs the country millions of dollars each year.

I am the mother of a transgender man, and I couldn't be more proud of the man I see now: he is brilliant, very involved in the community, a great student, and, in his professor's words, a very promising professional. None of that would have happened if he hadn't had the proper gender affirmation medical care.

In your hands, you have the lives of thousands of promising young people who will be the future citizens who drive this country forward with their knowledge and unbreakable will. This bill threatens the future of the entire country.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my thoughts on HB 2791. I urge you to vote against its passage.

HB2791  
Paris Raite  
PRIVATE CITIZEN  
2/27/2024  
paris.raite@gmail.com  
WRITTEN ONLY  
OPPONENT

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Paris Raite and I am a voter in Douglas County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791

In Lawrence we are known as being a safe haven for LGBTQ folks in Kansas. Last year after the so called "Womens Bill of Rights" passed we immediately passed a safe haven ordinance to let our community know that we don't stand for any form of hatred or telling people they aren't allowed to be their authentic selves. You will hear this a lot today but GENDER AFFIRMING CARE IS LIFE SAVING CARE. Please, leave our trans kids, who already face so much, ALONE.

PLEASE. I urge you all to vote NO on the passage of HB 2791. Thank you.

HB 2791  
Rachel Levitt  
Private Citizen  
2/23/2024  
rachel.e.levitt@gmail.com  
WRITTEN ONLY  
OPPONENT

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to share with you my concerns about HB 2791. My name is Rachel Levitt and I am a voter in Pottawatomie County. I hope the committee will vote no on HB 2791

HB 2791 scares me! This bill tries to trick law makers into thinking it prevents child abuse when in fact it actively abuses children by restricting parents, doctors, and children from getting and giving care. You have likely heard from out-of-state groups and people opposing gender affirming care, but none will have the expertise and long term studies that medical and psychological studies have found, time and again, which consistently find that gender affirming care prevents mental health harms, saves lives, and promotes better outcomes according to every rigorous peer reviewed evidence-based study that exists. Access to gender-affirming care has a positive relationship with the mental health of transgender youth and lowers their risk of depression and suicide (Bauer et al., 2015; Green et al., in press). Transgender youth who have access to gender-affirming medical care experience improvements in mental health and often show mental health comparable to their cisgender peers (Toomey et al., 2022). Additionally, the distress experienced by youth who are provided treatments, but then decide to discontinue them and grow up to be cisgender, is significantly less than that which is experienced by transgender youth when such treatments are delayed (Ashley, 2021).

In addition to harming the children of Kansas, this bill would exacerbate the brain drain in Kansas. If allowed to pass, the restriction of state funds in promoting gender affirming care would adversely impact University of Kansas, Kansas State University, and so many other keystone employers of the state. We would lose substantial workers because they would move their families out of state to get their children the gender affirming care they deserve. We would lose the well trained doctors we already don't have enough of, making other kinds of care like emergency and specialist care even more difficult to access because folk's would fear for their licenses and would have to make ethical choices to leave rather than deny care as their oath requires. We would lose college students who will choose to go to other out-of-state universities because they can access gender affirming care in their first year when they might be 17 still.

I know that my partner and I have already made decisions not to spend money on home improvements or purchase a new car from our local dealership because we have to consider leaving Kansas if more anti-LGBTQ laws are passed. We can't invest in our state if it becomes a place where the laws would make it unsafe for us and our future children to live.

Thank you for this opportunity to weigh-in on your legislative considerations. Even if you are not convinced by the necessity of protecting access to gender affirming care, I hope you see limiting access having a devastating economic impacts. I encourage you to vote no on HB 2791.

HB 2791  
RACHEL MCDANIEL, LSCSW, SEP  
PRIVATE PRACTICE PSYCHOTHERAPIST  
2/27/2024  
RACHEL.MCDANIEL@RLCWICHITA.COM  
WRITTEN ONLY  
OPPONENT

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Rachel McDaniel, LSCSW, SEP and I am a voter in Harvey County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791

I am a Licensed Specialist Clinical Social worker in the State of Kansas. I work in private practice serving primarily the LGBTQ+ population. I write this testimony in an attempt to bring science to the discussion of gender affirming care.

The science I bring to you is from the World Professional Association on Transgender Health (WPATH). I attended their training in 2021 as part of better serving this population and my community. Through this training I learned half of Americans will present with a mental health condition at some time in their life. (American Psychological Association, 2013) Among those who identify as transgender, 41% will attempt suicide at some point in their life. According to the Centers for Disease Control suicide is the third leading cause of death in high school aged children and is on the rise in that age group. Within the transgender community 98% of transgender women report traumatic events and 91% report multiple traumatic events. This is compared to 17.8% of people within the general population reporting traumatic events. Of hate crimes committed, 72% are against transgender women.

We also know that the minority stress of being “othered” is associated with risks to chronic health. People who are “othered” get sick at higher rates, develop chronic conditions at higher rates, and die younger than their counterparts. Not caring for our transgender community members leads to great cost to our State as people become disabled requiring state support. People who are “othered” are more likely to be victimized, discriminated against, and receive lower quality of health care. When people in the transgender community do not have access to gender affirming care they are at higher risks for depression, anxiety, suicidality, and complex trauma. Gender affirming care mitigates these risks and keeps us from losing the diverse voices in our communities.

The scientific community knows that living in secret does not allow people to develop healthy psychological functioning. One of the foundations of being human is to be connected to others, which can not happen when our identity is criminalized. When we are not safe to be ourselves we struggle to develop trust, attachment, and the ability to be emotionally vulnerable with others. This bill threatens us all when it discriminates against people being their most authentic selves.

In my years of experience I have learned and watched people within the transgender community routinely tell me they did not expect to grow to adulthood. These people tell me they expect to die prematurely as a result of the way they are traumatized and become victims of hate crimes. I have

held space for people in modern America fearing for their lives because of who they are and the skin they are in.

This bill has overly broad definitions that pose a risk of real harm and possible loss of life through lack of legislation to provide the client-tailored approach necessary. This bill threatens my licensure and my clients. I am at risk of penalization for holding space for people vulnerably and authentically. This bill threatens my colleagues' licensure as they work to provide services such as school counseling, teaching, daycare, and other careers that are necessary for a thriving State. This bill raises constitutional concerns about freedom of speech. This bill puts the State of Kansas at risk of losing more of its valuable professional infrastructure that is already understaffed. I implore you to not pass this bill as it has ramifications for the future viability of the State of Kansas.

Transgender healthcare is a complex issue requiring far more delicate management than broad-sweeping legislative decisions. This is healthcare, which is complex and requires interventions tailored on an individual basis. The law is a blunt instrument, and one likely to cause harm that I prefer to think of as unintentional. Healthcare is the most capable of supporting people making these decisions in their daily lives. Please, leave healthcare to the healthcare professionals.

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of HB 2791. Thank you.

Committee on Health and Human Services  
February 25, 2024  
House Bill 2791

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Douglas County  
Testimony in Opposition

Chairman Landwher and members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to offer testimony against HB 2791. My name is Raine Toxtle Flores-Pena, and I am a voter of Douglas County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791.

As a transgender adult, who used to be a transgender youth, this bill is cruel in targeting life saving care of trans youth. Trans youth, more than ever, are incredibly vulnerable in a climate and should have access to the life saving care that gender affirming. Especially when only 3 weeks ago Nex Benedict two-spirit, non-binary youth was murdered in the girls bathroom of Owasso Highschool in Oklahoma, only a state down from us. You state that “types of procedures are almost entirely unknown because there are no long-term studies on either the effectiveness or safety of such procedures”.

This is entirely false. Several studies and surveys have been published, showing the clear benefits of gender affirming care for trans people. For example, the 2022 US Transgender Survey’s early results show that “only 3% report lower satisfaction rates, with 79% stating they are “a lot more satisfied” after transitioning... for transgender people receiving gender-affirming care – 98% of transgender individuals taking hormones are more satisfied with their lives.” Those who had supportive families, those who received gender-affirming care, and those who lived in a nondiscriminatory state reported a **73% decrease in suicidality and a 60% decrease in depression**. Gender affirming care is lifesaving, medically sounds and is tailored to each transgender person’s individual needs. It is not experimental, and each transgender person works closely with their doctor to find what is the correct treatment.

As a low-income transgender man, threatening to pull federal funding from any clinic, facility, or place that “promotes” social or medical transition to those under 18 is incredibly cruel. The clinic I receive gender affirming care from is also where I receive my general care, such as flu shots, dental care, and therapy. Pulling funding from clinics like these will take away the sliding scale fees that make it possible for me to access ALL healthcare, not just gender affirming care. This will lead to worse health outcomes for Kansans, and considering Kansas is one of TEN states in the US who have not expanded Medicaid, I don’t think it is wise to limit even more of our options.

Finally, this bill is written incredibly vaguely. What is going to be considered “promoting” transition? Is it simply displaying a transgender pride flag? Is it stating the fact that gender affirming care in its scope is a medically supported treatment option for transgender people by all major medical associations? Is it simply having a transgender person work and exist at these clinics, facilities, schools, around children, which will be considered “encouragement”? Do we not have a right to exist without persecution from our government? I have lived in Kansas for more than 10 years. I am a citizen of Kansas regardless of this wave of hate against transgender people, and I deserve to be safe in my own home.

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill, and I ask that you all vote no for the passage of HB2791. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Raine Toxtle Flores-Peña  
Douglas County  
[titaniamemoriosa@gmail.com](mailto:titaniamemoriosa@gmail.com)  
(785)691-9811

HB 2791  
REBECCA BROWN  
PRIVATE CITIZEN  
2/27/2024  
bbrown\_kc@yahoo.com  
WRITTEN ONLY  
OPPONENT

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts on HB 2791. My name is Rebecca Brown and I am a voter in Johnson County. I'm writing to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791.

If your child experienced gender dysmorphia and was suicidal, would you rest easy knowing HB 2791 restricted your family's health care options?

This bill mandates fear-based informed consent and threatens providers with lawsuits and licensure implications. It also BANS providers from obtaining liability insurance to protect against this.

Health care decisions belong with parents and health care professionals. HB 2791 is an ill-advised attempt to regulate health care, taking no account for the actual people involved nor their private health histories. Gender-affirming care is life-saving medical care, evidence-based and medically necessary.

Thank you for considering my input. Again, I encourage you all to vote no on HB 2791. Thank you.



HB 2791

Rev. Caela Simmons Wood

On behalf of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Manhattan and Kansas Interfaith Action

2/26/2024

pastor@uccmanhattan.org

Written only

Opponent

Chairman Landwehr and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective on HB 2791 with you. Thank you, also, for your service to our great state. My name is Caela Simmons Wood. I am a fifth-generation Kansan living in Riley County. I have been an ordained Christian minister for almost 20 years. I am writing today to oppose HB 2791.

As a pastor, I have seen first-hand the impact this legislation has on transgender Kansans. When bills like this are discussed, I know I will find myself in emergency rooms with teens and adults who have attempted suicide because they believe there is no hope for their future. My heart breaks for them. They, along with all other Kansans, are beloved children of God, created in the Divine image of Love. They have a right to pursue happiness and make a contribution to their communities. When they see legislators debating their basic humanity, they feel worthless and terrified. They lose hope.

This particular piece of legislations is written incredibly broadly. Who will interpret what it means to “promote,” “provide,” or “advocate” for social transition or gender-affirming medical care? This bill is clearly discriminatory against transgender Kansans. Haven't we already learned that discrimination and taking away people's civil rights is a no-win situation? Additionally, there are constitutional concerns about the right of state employees to free speech.

Gender-affirming care literally saves lives. Medical decisions should be between a patient and their doctor (and the patient's guardians if the patient is a minor). Bills like this not only lead to suicides, they cause people to flee from Kansas. They will also make it difficult for us to recruit and retain medical professionals who do not want to have their hands tied by elected officials.

Again, thank you for taking the time to listen to your constituents and for all you do to serve our state. I urge you to side with Love and vote no on HB 2791. Thank you for your time.

HB2791  
Rev. Caroline Dean  
Kansas Interfaith Action  
2/26/2024  
cwestlawson@gmail.com  
Written Only  
Opponent

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Reverend Caroline Dean and I live in Douglas County. I partner with Kansas Interfaith Action and represent faith communities across the state. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791

My best friend has a gender fluid child. They are a gift to me and to our world. My friend is researching extensively to find the best care for her child. It is not a simple matter, but it is best left in the hand of families and doctors who know the exact situation best. Legislators are risking the lives of our Kansas youth by getting in between them and the professional sphere of health care. We should be supporting the best practice and standards of care that help all of our youth thrive.

Thank you for your time. Please vote no on the passage of HB2791. Blessings for the thriving of all of our youth and their families.

HB 2791

The Rev. Doreen Rice

Private Citizen

2/27/2024

rector@stdavidschurch.com

WRITTEN ONLY

OPPONENT

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you for your commitment to public service. My name is The Rev. Doreen Rice and I am a voter in Shawnee County. I appreciate the opportunity to express my thoughts regarding HB 2791.

My child is married to a remarkable, confident young person who is trans. This person is heading to law school and is on the dean's list of a large, prestigious university. This person and my child own a car, have jobs, and pay their rent and state and local taxes. Most importantly, they love one another. They do not have an agenda nor do they promote their expression of love. They respect one another and the people around them. It is my hope as a parent and a priest that the state of Kansas will offer the same respect to all trans individuals and their parents and physicians. Trans people are human beings who deserve the support and care of their communities. Community members are not qualified to legislate health care and health care access for others, including trans individuals. The community must trust the judgment of the medical community and parents.

Again, thank you for allowing me to express my personal experience around life with a trans family member. Please vote no on the passage of HB 2791 and publicly affirm your respect for the dignity of all people.

HB 2791  
Rev. Dr. Isabel Call  
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Manhattan, Minister  
2/27/2024  
pastor@uufm.net  
WRITTEN ONLY  
OPPONENT

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you so receiving my thoughts on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Isabel Call and I am a voter and pastor in Riley County. I am writing today to encourage you to vote no on HB 2791.

My congregation is made up of grandparents, parents, mentors, and friends and we are proud of our transgender youth. Our faith has publicly affirmed transgender people and rejected discrimination and hate for over 30 years because living your true identity is part of our free exercise of religion. People of all genders are beautiful and holy. We trust the parents and doctors of trans kids.

People who come out as trans and non-binary do so at immense risk. My religious community is feeling this strongly as we empathize and grieve with the family and friends of Nex Benedict, who suffered from bullying in a public school in our neighboring state. Yet despite the physical violence and emotional abuse that trans people endure, many continue living their truth. Legalizing discrimination against an already marginalized group is hardly an act of love. To frame this bill as anti-abuse is painfully ironic. In our faith, we know that abuse is denying the truth of young people and emboldening those who would bully them; and that is exactly what this bill would do. Kansas needs parents who listen to what their children say and seek out professional support. Kansas needs medical and mental health providers to attend to the needs of their patients using the most recent standards of care. To intervene in these relationships is abusive. I am disheartened that legislators would consider this blatant overreach.

Furthermore, while this bill may appear to only target access to gender-affirming healthcare, it is written extremely broadly—such that it could have significant additional harmful consequences. It clearly discriminates against transgender Kansans and raises constitutional concerns about state employee's free speech rights.

My faith ancestor Frances David said, "We need not think alike to love alike." You do not need to share the emotional, physical, and spiritual experience of a transgender teen in order to affirm their dignity and give them the support and resources to grow up into a loving world. Please redirect your energy toward legislation that promotes love and care within families, between patients and providers, and between diverse people in schools and other public places. Thank you.

HB 2791  
Rhoswyn Hicks  
Private Citizen  
2/25/2024  
trhicks158@gmail.com  
Written Only  
Opponent

Members of the committee, thank you for this time to share my position and arguments on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Rhoswyn Hicks and I am a voter in Douglas County. I am writing this letter in hopes to discourage the committee from voting yes and passing HB 2791.

I oppose house bill 2791 because of the danger it presents to trans joy, the elation one feels due to having the freedom to express themselves and live life the way they want to, in the body they want to. I remember understanding that I wasn't a girl from a very young age. In elementary school I found myself identifying with the boys of my class more and spending plenty of time with them. The label of 'tomboy' became something nearly everyone branded upon me and I wore it with a sense of pride but, to me, it meant more than being a girl who liked boyish things I genuinely felt like I was a boy. I want this testimony to remain mostly positive so I will gloss over the years of confusion and hurt I endured while living in a community and house that wasn't accepting of transness and will move on to my years in college, when I began to experience the freedom to express myself how I wanted. The first time I allowed myself to use pronouns that weren't she/her I felt amazing. I ended up treating myself by going out with a friend who had been helping me with some of the uncertainty I felt around my gender. The first time that I wore a binder elicited a similar response. When my fiancée began transitioning I watched her blossom into a beautiful woman, she smiled way more often and way more genuinely than in the past. Transition, both social and medical, is vital to the survival of trans individuals and especially trans children. As more laws are passed to restrict access to trans healthcare there will be a mental health crisis of horrific proportions, studies have shown again and again that as anti-trans legislation increases so does the number of calls to trans-specific crisis centers. We need to trust that our youth know how they feel, as is the case for most individuals. Please vote no on HB 2791, vote no on the eradication of trans joy in our youth.

Thank you again for listening to my thoughts, I sincerely hope that they discourage you from passing HB 2791.

PRIVATE CITIZEN

02-27-24

rowanscheuring@gmail.com

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to express my thoughts regarding HB 2791. My name is Rowan A. Scheuring and I am a voter in Douglas County. I am writing today to urge the committee to vote no on HB 2791.

It is hard to overstate the destructive effect bills like this have on my community. It is heartbreaking having conversations with parents who are making plans to leave the state because of the fear that their children will be unable to receive care if they stay here. Some families have already left. As I'm sure you will hear and have heard from many others, bills like this go against the standards of care recommended by every major medical association, including the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Medical Association. It is our collective responsibility to foster an environment where everyone can live authentically and without fear of discrimination. I want to be proud to be a Kansan. I want to be able to confidently tell people that this is a safe and welcoming state that will support them rather than add to the oppression they experience. By voting against this bill, you have the opportunity to stand on the side of justice, compassion, and fairness.

Thank you all again for your time and consideration, and I encourage you all to vote no on the passage of HB 2791.



**KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF DEFENSE COUNSEL**

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## **TESTIMONY**

**TO: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**  
**FROM: RYAN MEYER, PRESIDENT**  
**KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF DEFENSE COUNSEL (KADC)**  
**RE: HB 2791**  
**DATE: FEBRUARY 29, 2024**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony in opposition of HB 2791 which would enact the forbidding abusive child transitions act creating personal civil liability for healthcare professionals, as well as professional licensure risks for healing arts practitioners and nurses who do not comply with this act. My name is Ryan Meyer, and I am President of the Kansas Association of Defense Counsel (KADC). The KADC's members frequently defend all types of healthcare providers in civil lawsuits and with respect to maintaining their professional licensure in good standing.

The proposed legislation would encroach upon the independent professional judgment of healthcare providers who hold fiduciary and ethical duties to act in the best interests of their patients on a tailored case-by-case basis. These duties to their patients are guided by evidenced based standards and guidelines established by learned professionals in the healthcare community. Healthcare standards are capable of evolving over time with the acquisition of additional studies and data.

Concern with this legislation arises with the restriction of access to healthcare and mandating statutorily required disclosures. This legislation would encroach upon the independent professional judgment of healthcare providers in advising patients and, in some cases, eliminating healthcare treatment options altogether. Healthcare decisions are best left to the professional judgment of healthcare providers in collaboration with the minor patients and, as appropriate, their parents exclusive of payment means.

Additional concern arises because this legislation would establish a standard of practice for informed consent. Like healthcare malpractice cases, the standards of practice are best left to the professional healthcare communities considering the uniqueness of each patient case and developments in the professional field, rather than through untailed and rigid legislation that may be inconsistent with ever evolving healthcare data and standards.

This legislation could foreseeably put healthcare providers at odds with their ethical duties. In those instances, compliance with ethical duties over legislatively imposed duties would place healing arts practitioners and nurses at risk of discipline to their professional licenses which carries significant operational, reputational and legal consequences. This legislation would also impose personal civil liability for damages (incapable of being insured) that could foreseeably deter healthcare professionals from offering vital healthcare services and create a hardship to obtain defense counsel for such lawsuits. This is especially concerning given that HB 2791 also shifts the burden of the plaintiff's fees for these uninsurable acts to defendant healthcare providers.

For all these reasons, this legislation encroaches upon the sanctity of the healthcare provider's duty to and relationship with the patient. KADC is in opposition of HB 2791. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



HB 2791  
Ryann Brooks  
Private Citizen  
2/22/2024  
ryann.brooks@gmail.com  
WRITTEN ONLY  
OPPONENT

My name is Ryann Brooks. I am a homeowner and taxpayer in Lyon County, Kansas. I have two children. One of my children is transgender. I am writing to you to encourage the committee to VOTE NO on HB 2791.

I want to convey to you the critical impact that gender-affirming care has had on the life of my own child, who is now 15 years old. Without access to this essential care, it's quite possible that my child would not be alive today. Their journey has been marked by unwavering courage and resilience, and I am deeply thankful for the support and resources that have enabled them to live authentically as their true selves.

From a young age, my child grappled with the realization that their gender identity did not align with the sex they were assigned at birth. This inner conflict caused them immense distress and confusion, necessitating support to navigate this fundamental aspect of their identity. Gender-affirming care became their lifeline, equipping them with the tools and resources needed to explore their gender identity and make informed decisions about their body and future.

The impact of gender-affirming care on my child's mental health and well-being cannot be overstated. It has bestowed upon them a sense of validation and acceptance that has allowed them to flourish in ways previously unimaginable. Today, my child is thriving, enveloped in love and support, and I am profoundly proud of the person they have become.

Yet, our journey has been fraught with adversity. Due to relentless bullying and discrimination at their public high school, I made the heart-wrenching decision to withdraw my child and enroll them in virtual schooling. The hostility and ignorance they encountered simply for embracing their true selves were intolerable, and it infuriates me to think of the countless other children enduring similar torment.

My child's story epitomizes the life-saving impact of gender-affirming care for transgender and gender-diverse youth. By affording children the support they need to explore and affirm their gender identity, we empower them to cultivate a robust sense of self-esteem and resilience indispensable for navigating life's challenges.

I implore you to fight for gender-affirming care for children under 18 and vehemently oppose HB 2791. This bill threatens to curtail or impede access to this critical care, jeopardizing the well-being and very lives of vulnerable youth.

Thank you for heeding this urgent plea and for prioritizing the welfare of transgender and gender-diverse youth.

February 26, 2024

House Health and Human Service Committee

Re: Opposition Testimony – HB 2791 – Written and oral

Committee Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony here today. My name is Shannon Berquist. I grew up in central Kansas and now raise two children in Douglas county with my husband—also a Kansas native and the son of an army veteran. I am here today opposing HB 2791.

I want to address the hysteria that has gripped our nation when people talk about transgender children. This fear is the reason we are all here today. People in this room are so afraid of transgender children, that they have spent large amounts of time and energy to draft legislation like HB 2791 that will impact such a small minority in incredibly hurtful ways. All of this legislation is fear based and not rooted in reality, and so I have to ask myself, how do we combat fear.

Humans fear what they don't understand, the unknown or different. If the legislators that crafted these bills and those that would support them were ready, I would invite you to learn from me. My family is not trying to start a revolution. Myself and my husband are doing what all parents do. We are loving our children. We are caring for our children. But most importantly, and perhaps this is radical, we are listening to our children, because children have important things to say.

When our son came to us and said he didn't feel like the boy we had been raising him as, we listened, and we asked our son what that meant to him. In the beginning, that meant that he wanted to paint his fingernails and wear pink clothing. Later that meant that he wanted to be called she/her and have a new name. None of these things that we are doing to support our child are groundbreaking or radical. We are simply listening to our child and letting her tell us what feels right to her. We are loving her even though these changes in her life are outside of our experience, and can often be hard to navigate.

Our daughter is a normal Kansas kid, she goes to a Kansas public school, she loves legos, art, and learning to play the saxophone. She plays sports on weekends and has play dates with friends. She is 1 in 420 kids and the only trans child in her school, in her friend group, or in our entire extended families. Her existence should not merit laws. Our parenting should not require lawmakers to take pen to paper. Myself and my husband know best how to protect our two children. Together, we limit their media to age-appropriate programming, and our children do not have access at home to the internet or social media. Their friendships are monitored to make sure that they are positive and safe, and as parents, we know where our children are when they

are not with us. When our children are sick or hurt, we know best how to comfort them and nurse them back to health. Our family should be able to decide what is right for our children because we are the people who love them and know them best.

I am asking today that this madness comes to an end. That the fear based legislation stops. I am asking Kansas lawmakers to take a step back and come to the table with open hearts and minds ready to learn from families like mine. Like any good parents, our parenting end goal is to raise happy, healthy, functioning adults. And to do that, we need the freedom to make the choices that are best for our family and the legal ability to do so. Thank you.

HB 2791  
Sheila  
Private Citizen  
2/27/2024  
sheilaemom5@gmail.com  
Written only  
OPPONENT

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me time to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Sheila and I am a voter in Sedgwick County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791.

I am a nurse practitioner providing care for folx of all ages. I provide primary care and gender affirming care. Gender affirming care is something that assists an individual to feel more comfortable in their body. Whether that be Botox, viagra, hormone replacement therapy, breast augmentation, liposuction or any other treatment that promotes a more positive and healthy feeling of self. We do this everyday for cisgendered folx of all ages. Why should I deny a transgender person that same quality of life?

We allow freedom of choice in all other matters of healthcare. For instance we have rules such as not having diabetic, no salt, fluid restriction diets etc in nursing homes, so that people have a choice. Even if that person does not have the mental capacity to make good choices that medical professionals feel actually harm them. The state and federal government have no problem looking past the rapid decline of the uncontrolled diabetic just because they are allowed a choice. I have found no issues with reimbursement for the negative consequences and outcomes, even when that is typically viewed as a poor choice. I could name multiple other incidences that we allow freedom of choice to folx that in the long run has actually proven to be harmful.

Gender affirming care has shown to improve quality of life. It allows a man to feel more like a man and woman to feel more like a woman. Just because a cisman has a low testosterone level and feels exhausted, lowered sex drive, inability to perform, we don't disregard their feelings and write it off as something the body is naturally doing now. We treat their concern, they feel better and feel more like themselves. Why would we choose not do that for someone else?

Your own personal bias or belief system is just that, yours. It should not be used to determine what other folx choose do for them selves or their minor. Personal beliefs should not give the right to take away freedoms.

Gender affirming care does not always mean hormones or surgeries. It can be counseling, support, guidance for patients, parents and families regardless of age. It reduces mental health issues in folx with gender dysphoria. Passing this bill will increase kids self harm and suicide rates.

I have personally seen minors and adults improve in regards to mental health after receiving gender affirming care. It improves their quality of life. They are better able to go out and get jobs and maintain them. Have families and be productive members of society.

Taking away freedom to choose is telling them they do not matter. Instead of erasing them from society how about we educate society so there is the chance to better understand. Trans folx are not just what people see on social platforms or portrayed in the media. They are human beings that deserve the right to choose their path in life.

Gender affirming care does not raise health care costs because of adverse reactions or outcomes. Unlike the uncontrolled diabetic allowed to slowly kill themselves with poor choices that is state funded as in the example above.

Humans in the United States of America are born with the inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. If our creator has given us free will, then whose job is it to judge, restrict or take away that freedom to choose. I believe our creator not our government.

Growing up in Topeka, Ks in the time of Fred Phelps and the alienation of gay and lesbian rights was difficult. I was raised by a lesbian mother. She taught me to not give up on fighting for people's rights while also living in fear of persecution. I do not want our children to grow up in that kind of environment especially when they are being targeted. My passion has been and always will be to provide health promotion and disease prevention. What better way to prevent a catastrophic outcome such as suicide by providing care that is so desperately needed. This is not a new phenomenon. This has been around since humans began. This is a new time and we have the ability to actually treat these human beings with evidence based practice in safe and affirming environments. I do not want to this taken away.

I have been so proud to tell people yes Kansas cares about you. Yes in Kansas you can receive care. Yes in Kansas it can be done! What an amazing state to be in or is it? I hope it continues to be the state that amazes people around the country for their rights that improve and affirm that all humans are created equal.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you all for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill. I speak from the heart but also backed with medical knowledge and experience. I encourage you all to please vote no of HB 2781. Thank you.

HB 2791  
Shelly Kirkpatrick  
Private Citizen  
2/27/0024  
14shellyk@gmail.com  
Written Only  
OPPONENT

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Jane Smith and I am a voter in Shawnee County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791.

I oppose this bill. Legislators should, too. We need to help these children, not hurt them!

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of HB 2791. Thank you.

HB 2791  
Sherry Cooper  
Private citizen  
2/23/2024  
S-COOPER@COX.NET  
Written only  
Opponent

Chairman Landwehr and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to express my opposition to HB 2791. My name is Sherry Cooper and I am a voter in Reno County.

This bill simply should not move forward.

Major medical associations are opposed to bills like this for good cause. Legislators aren't experts in this field, and there are already protocols in place to manage the careful assessment and treatment of each individual. Legislators are not the parents or friends of these young people, nor do they know or understand their lives.

Further, it seems odd to me that persons adamant about parental rights to decline vaccinations for minors in matters of public health should be so exercised to promote this apparent overreach in private health matters.

The language of this bill is overbroad, and again places legislators' opinions in place of professional standards, with the added scourge of legal and/or professional harm should the nebulously described prohibitions be deemed to have been violated by professionals.

Finally, I submit that concern about child abuse is a valid cause to oppose this bill. The willingness of some politicians and citizens to pile on marginalized people in a manner reminiscent of the Satanic Panic of the 1980s is no good service to anyone. These attitudes and actions are capable of stifling empathy, inquiry, and respect for our common humanity. No concession to delegitimizing a young person's experience of their own self should be countenanced by the Kansas Legislature.

Thank you for hearing my thoughts on this bill. Again, I call on each of you to vote no on the passage of HB 2791.

To: The Kansas House Committee on Health and Human Services  
Brenda Landwehr – Chair  
Dr. John Eplee – Vice Chair  
Susan Ruiz – Ranking Minority

Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to read my written testimony.

I oppose HB 2791

Hope.

Ask yourselves as you read and hear testimony on these bills: How are you providing HOPE to trans children and their families when you ban affirmative healthcare for trans youth?

As many of you know, having served alongside of you just a few years ago, I am a trans woman. I'm 61 years old now, but I knew what my gender was when I was a kindergartner. Although I didn't begin to live authentically until I was 51, I was still trans as a child. Transgender is who you ARE not what you DO. Its who I've always been. There aren't a lot of trans people my age, not because less of us identified that way, but rather over 40% of us couldn't find hope in the world of the 1960s and 70s, so, instead, we tried to take our own lives. We are a smart bunch and often found ways that looked like accidents in one way or another so as to somehow spare the people we loved the additional grief of wondering why we jumped off of the planet.

Counseling services at the time focused on convincing us that we weren't trans. Medical services at the time recommended we engage in behavior appropriate to our sex assigned at birth. The supposed common sense of the time said the same. We tried. Often, those of us who identify as trans women tried to hypermasculinize ourselves. The stories of trans women my age who were high school quarterbacks, military heroes, barroom brawlers are numerous. As medicine and mental health treatments have evolved over the last 60 years, so has hope accelerated within the trans community.

Trans youth in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have vastly superior medical and mental health treatment than when I was a youth. As you are aware numerous studies have demonstrated a tremendous relief of mental health stress when trans people are allowed to be themselves – to express themselves. When those treatments are made illegal, that hope dies.

As the health professionals among you can explain, it is no wonder, with the incredible amount of research and experience of medical and mental health improvements for trans people, that ALL of the major US Health Organizations have said that trans affirming healthcare is needed. Matter of fact those opposed to trans kids affirming themselves have gone to great lengths to create splinter groups to produce a limited amount of research to the contrary. These groups



have had far reaching political influence, not only in the US but worldwide. Whether we are speaking of SEGM or Do No Harm, these groups are based in political motivation and not in medical advancement. They do not project HOPE but rather FEAR. When the reliance on detransition studies that have been retracted due to incompetent research techniques (Littman studies) or because they've chosen to build a study upon the previous faulty research techniques (Diaz/Bailey study) or have simply been taken so far out of context that the study originator has come out and spoke about how the study is being misused (Steensma), we still see these outlier organizations promoting these studies within gullible state legislators and legislatures using bad data. The truth about detransition is that the rate of regret is lower than that for open heart surgery. The handful of supposed detransitioners who are trot out in a dog and pony show of testimony in state legislatures are seldom asked the important questions. Such as "How do you identify now?" "What lengths did you go through to circumvent what checks are in place to help you decide if it was something else?" "Were you honest with your therapist?" While this may seem to be victim blaming, it is simply trying to get all the truth out in these cases.

As to studies of medication. Low quality studies are prevalent in most medications we take. As to medications being prescribed off label, has your doctor ever prescribed an off label med for you? If you are a medical professional, have you ever prescribed an off label medication based on your experience with its effectiveness?

As cisgender individuals you can no more fully understand the experience of someone who is transgender than we can understand how you were so fortunate that your internal identity of who you are aligns with the sex you presented at birth. When we speak of the compelling interest of the state in these matters, why does the state feel compelled to remove HOPE?

According to the Trevor Project, just having these hearings and debates on legislation that would ban affirmation for trans people – in any aspect- have taken their toll on the mental health of trans folk. In a news story published recently:

"A national crisis hotline for 2SLGBTQ+ youth says [calls have more than tripled](#) following the news of Nex Benedict's death.

"If you look back to when our crisis hotline began in April of 2022, for about 6 months there, the number one reason for a crisis outreach call was parental rejection, being forced out, scared about coming out," said Lance Preston, Founder and Executive Director of Rainbow Youth Project USA. "Now, our number one reason is:

'my government hates me,'

'my school doesn't want me,'

'they don't want me to use the bathroom,'

‘they don’t want me to read a book.’

So it’s really shifted and that’s sad, but that is also across the country.”

If you choose to think there is merit in the outlier groups, then, instead of considering bans, why not look at creating legislation for the KU School of Med to do macro studies of the evidence we have or create their own studies? Why not pass legislation to track the reasons why youth attempt suicide and whether or not the youth was part of the LGBTQ community? I know those that are proponents of this legislation don’t want those studies to happen, they already know that the opponents are right.

I, like any of the trans people who will give testimony or be in your committee room, KNOW who I AM. It has never been about what actions I take, what I wear, what hormones course through my body. Being a woman is my identity. No law restricting what actions I’m allowed changes that. It never will. What laws that restrict how I express who I am do is to create a world around me, and all trans people, young and old, where we have to lie about ourselves just to be in public. While I will always encourage that we all live our lives out of love and not fear, these laws strike fear into the trans community that there will be a time when being ourselves will be against the law. In Kansas it already is. If I were in the Statehouse during this hearing, I would have to use the men’s restroom as there is an “M” on my birth certificate, even though I don’t possess male genitalia. This is the world these bills create. They create a Kansas where those who are not cisgender will have no hope.

Instead of finding the state has a compelling interest to break the spirit of those who are gender diverse, why not reach into your own hearts, do what you know to be right, deny this legislation and give HOPE.

Stephanie Byers

She/Her

Former Representative, Kansas House District 86

HB2791  
SUSAN RAY  
PRIVATE CITIZEN  
2/27/2024  
susieeray@gmail.com  
WRITTEN ONLY  
OPPONENT

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Susan Ray and I am a voter in Reno County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2791"

Medical care for gender dysphoria is supported and advocated for by every major medical association. Patients, families, and doctors are making evidence-based decisions in their healthcare options. Just like them, you and I would want our healthcare discussions with our doctors to remain private, as well as our medical history and plans. We would all feel violated if we were told the government now had the authority to look through your records and make decisions for you, even though they lack any medical skill.

In addition, by using ambiguous words such as "promote", "provide", and "advocate" for social transition or gender affirming care, you have targeted every single person in the child's life. Knowing that 82% of transgender youth have considered suicide and 40% have attempted suicide, according to the following study:

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32345113/>,

it seems to me you are dangerously setting up transgender youth for isolation from any and all support from any school personnel, church personnel, mental health professionals, medical professionals, family members, even receptionists and neighbors and grandparents and friends. That's a lot of people's right to free speech you're stepping on with the language of this bill.

This is a required question

Thank you for listening to me. I encourage you to vote no on HB 2791. Thank you.

PRIVATE CITIZEN

02-27-24

skeeterscorner@gmail.com

Thank you members of the committee for listening today. My name is Taisia Sarazov and I am a voter in Johnson County. I am writing to urge the committee to vote no on HB 2791.

I am a proud citizen of Kansas and I have personally benefitted from personal freedoms regarding my medical power over my body. I believe that this vaguely worded bill is not only a threat to young children, as it could easily be twisted to harm our most vulnerable, but also that it would violate some of our most basic freedoms and our access to medical care and self determination.

Thank you again for hearing my testimony and I once again urge you to vote no on HB 2791.

HB 2791  
Tammy Quayle  
Private Citizen, Parent of Transgender Young Adult  
2/26/2024  
mnquayle@gmail.com  
Written Only  
Opponent

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee,

My name is Tammy Quayle and my family is from Wichita. Our oldest child is transgender and has been receiving wonderful medical care that has greatly improved her life. I am writing you today to ask you to vote NO on HB 2791.

Six years ago our oldest child came out to us and told us she was transgender. She had known she was for many years before she felt brave enough to tell us, but kept it to herself until the gender dysphoria was so acute that she couldn't bear her life any longer. We needed help and we needed answers. Considering less than 2% of the population is transgender, we had never met anyone who was transgender. We prayed that God would guide us in helping her and finding the path she needed.

Luckily for us, our prayers were answered. We found an excellent medical team that helped us navigate her care. The doctors gave us advice based on science, facts, and real data. I'm very grateful to have professionals with expertise in this area help us create a treatment plan. I am so blessed to live in a state that allowed my husband and I the right to make decisions for our child with her medical team. I implore you not to take away the right for parents to make these decisions with their child and their doctors.

My child is now a thriving young adult. I have seen firsthand how my daughter has flourished with the proper medical care that is approved by the American Medical Association, the Endocrine Society, the American Academy of Family Physicians, and the American Academy of Pediatrics, just to name a few. She has no regrets in her transition, nor do we. After the last six years of being under her doctor's care, I can say she is living her best life. She is an honor student, an Eagle Scout, and volunteers in the community. She is a real asset to the great state of Kansas! To take away her care means she would have to leave the state. Kansas shouldn't have families fleeing our state to receive care that major medical organizations have approved.

Transgender children deserve quality evidence-based medical care, like my daughter was so fortunate to receive. Parents should have the right to make these decisions. Kansas families should have the freedom to pursue medically approved treatments for gender dysphoria. Please vote NO on the passage of HB2791.

Thank you,  
Tammy Quayle  
Wichita, Kansas



*End discrimination based on  
sexual orientation and  
gender identity*

Statement of Taryn Jones  
Lobbyist, Equality Kansas  
In Opposition to HB 2791  
House Committee on Health and Human Services  
February 28th, 2024

Good afternoon, Madame Chairman and members of the committee.

My name is Taryn Jones, and I am the lobbyist for Equality Kansas. I am writing to you to oppose HB 2791. I believe this bill to be extremely harmful not only to the trans community, but also to the medical community.

Laws like these are incredibly harmful to doctors. The civil penalty for a doctor with this bill can be 30 years after the child turns 18. This means that someone who received gender affirming care could sue up until they are 48 years old. There is a good chance that this doctor may not be practicing or even alive after 30 years. HB 2791 would also force doctors to get informed consent on any gender transition care. All medications and treatments come with side effects, and we don't make patients sign informed consent for other treatment, why this? Why are doctors being forced to read off a list of all possible side effects? Legislators who are not doctors are not licensed or trained to perform medicine. They should not be telling doctors how to practice or what is best for their patients.

HB 2791 also prevents people who receive state funds from advocating for any gender affirming care and prevents state employees from advocating and providing gender affirming care. While nurses, doctors and teachers all fall into this. There's another category that also falls into these guidelines. It's social workers and therapists. While I am the lobbyist for Equality Kansas, I am also a social worker. I can promise you that social workers and therapists will not continue to work if they are put under these limitations. Social workers own code of ethics will not allow this, and they could risk losing their license. Social workers have thankless jobs and often don't get paid well. We do it because we love the work. Can we really afford to lose any more of them? What happens when we don't have case workers at DCF or case managers in our mental health centers? There are already long lists to get into therapy what will happen when there are even less therapists? We can't afford to lose any more providers in our state.

For these reasons and more I am asking you to vote no on HB 2791. The harms to both medical providers, mental health professionals, and trans children would be astronomical if these laws were to go into effect. Please vote no on HB 2791.



Testimony of Taylor Morton, Kansas Lobbyist and Policy Analyst (written testimony)  
Planned Parenthood Great Plains Votes  
4401 W. 109th Street, Suite 200, Overland Park, KS 66211  
Regarding HB 2791 (Opponent)  
House Committee on Health and Human Services  
February 29, 2024

Planned Parenthood Great Plains Votes (“PPGPV”) is the political and advocacy arm of Planned Parenthood Great Plains (“PPGP”). PPGP offers expert, compassionate sexual and reproductive health care to patients with three health center locations in Kansas. PPGPV submits this testimony in opposition to House Bill 2791. HB 2791 would effectively ban gender-affirming medical care for transgender Kansans under age 18, in addition to severely restricting the use of state funds to provide gender-affirming care. Under HB 2791, providers would face the threat of increased civil liability and professional discipline, including loss of licensure.

HB 2791 creates liability for Kansas health care providers for treating patients in accordance with the standard of care. Gender-affirming care for patients under age 18 is considered best medical practice by most major medical organizations—including the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Association, and American Psychiatric Association. There is consensus in the medical community that gender-affirming care is medically necessary, safe, effective, and lifesaving. Specifically for youth under age 18, gender-affirming care consists mostly of access to mental health care, as well as puberty blockers and hormone treatments—both of which are reversible.

The provisions in HB 2791 are meant to stigmatize providers of gender-affirming care for minors. . HB 2791 would allow for a provider to be sued by the patient or their parents/guardians for up to 30 years after they turn 18. Providers would not be allowed to obtain professional liability insurance coverage for any damages assessed against the provider in such a suit. Rather than protecting patients, this would have the impact of creating a chilling effect for providers and effectively ban gender-affirming care in Kansas.

HB 2791 also requires providers to give patients state mandated information under the guise of “informed consent.” Informed consent is central to both the practice of medicine and medical ethics. Informed consent requires that patients receive relevant, accurate, and unbiased information about courses of treatment to ensure they can make sound decisions in conjunction with their provider. HB 2791 interferes with the process of informed consent by mandating providers give patients information as outlined in statute, regardless of whether this information is accurate or in line with the current standard of care. Additionally, there are already penalties in Kansas law for providers who fail to provide patients with informed consent.<sup>1</sup>

The American Medical Association has repeatedly opposed legislation that bans gender-affirming care for those under age 18, calling such efforts “dangerous legislative intrusion into the practice of

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<sup>1</sup> See K.S.A. 65-2837(b)(3) (defining “assisting in the care or treatment of a patient without the consent of the patient, the attending physician, or the patient’s legal representatives” as “unprofessional conduct” which is grounds for disciplinary actions under the Healing Arts Act)





medicine,” and emphasizing that it is “imperative that transgender minors be given the opportunity to explore their gender identity under the safe and supportive care of a physician.”<sup>2</sup> The American Psychiatric Association “opposes all legislative and other governmental attempts to limit access to [mental health support and gender-affirming care services] for trans and gender diverse youth, or to sanction or criminalize the actions of physicians and other clinicians who provide them.”<sup>3</sup>

HB 2791 puts transgender patients’ lives at risk by denying best practice medical care and support. Denial of gender-affirming care has been shown to contribute to depression, social isolation, self-hatred, risk of self-harm, and suicidal ideation and behavior. Transgender youth are more likely to feel depressed and anxious, harm themselves, or attempt suicide. Transgender and nonbinary youth are 2-2.5 times as likely to experience depressive symptoms, seriously consider suicide, and attempt suicide than their cisgender LGBTQ+ peers.<sup>4</sup> Even the introduction of discriminatory, anti-trans legislation is harmful for trans youth, especially considering the stigmatizing messages around these bills. A 2022 poll found that 85% of trans and nonbinary youth said their mental health was negatively affected by these laws.<sup>5</sup> Access to gender-affirming care—particularly puberty blockers—has been shown to decrease the likelihood of suicide and depression among transgender and nonbinary youth. Furthermore, individuals who are accepted and supported in their gender identity show better mental health and quality of life outcomes.<sup>6</sup>

HB 2791 mandates improper fear-based informed consent to parents/guardians before discussing social transition or affirming care and threatens health care providers with increased liability for providing best practice medical care. Gender-affirming care includes medical and non-medical interventions, and this type of care is necessary and lifesaving. PPGPV urges the Committee to oppose HB 2791.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ama-assn.org/health-care-advocacy/advocacy-update/march-26-2021-state-advocacy-update>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.psychiatry.org/File%20Library/About-APA/Organization-Documents-Policies/Policies/Position-Transgender-Gender-Diverse-Youth.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X\(19\)30922-X/fulltext](https://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X(19)30922-X/fulltext)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/blog/new-poll-illustrates-the-impacts-of-social-political-issues-on-lgbtq-youth/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000130>

HB 2791  
TERRA SHOWALTER  
PRIVATE CITIZEN  
2/27/2024  
TTSHOWALTER@GMAIL.COM  
WRITTEN ONLY  
OPPONENT

Members of the Committee, thank you for giving me time to share my thoughts on HB 2791. My name is Terra Showalter. I am a voter in Johnson County. I am writing today to ask that the committee vote no on HB 2791.

This bill, which does not take into account well-established medical research, is harmful to the citizens of Kansas and denies citizens the right to make their own decisions about their healthcare. Gender affirming medicine is valuable for the physical and mental health of both cisgender and transgender people. A friend of mine actually recently came close to attempting suicide as a result of lack of access to gender affirmng treatment. Should there be even less access for them and others, it is likely that there will be many more actual attempts at suicide.

Thank you again for hearing my thoughts on the bill. I ask that you vote no on the passage of HB 2791. Thank you.

Private Citizen and Chair of Equality Kansas

02-27-24

dotteau@gmail.com

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the committee, thank you for giving me time to share my thoughts on HB2791 with you today. My name is Thomas Alonzo, I am a voter in Wyandotte County and I am chair of Equality Kansas. I urge you to vote no on HB2791.

It is ironic that some of you chose to cite child abuse in this bill which is nothing but another attempt by a group of Lawmakers that think they no more than the majority of our nation's mental health professionals and physicians. The restrictions on assistance to children experiencing gender dysphoria are nothing short of child abuse and persecution of an already marginalized group of people. I remember growing up as a young gay man and being terrified of discover (back in the 60s and 70s) as I saw other LGBTQ+ people beaten and bullied, rejected by family and friends, some going on to suicide, drug addiction, human trafficking, self-isolation and engagement in unhealthy life choices. Being transgender, by the way, is NOT a life choice. These harmful bills persecute the Transgender community, send a message to Transgender people, especially children, that they are to be despised, dismissed, erased. And you all want to do that to a human being? I hear some of you profess deep commitment to your Faith and yet, this is how you would treat some of the most at-risk people, helpless people, in our society, especially children?

Mt 25:40 "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

I appreciate the opportunity to speak for myself and my community. I urge you to vote NO on this harmful bill.

HB 2791  
Tiffany Moos  
Private citizen  
2/27/2024  
tiffjones81@gmail.com  
Written Only  
Opponent

Thank you, committee members, for giving me the time to express my thoughts on HB 2791. My name is Tiffany Moos and I'm a registered Voter in Harvey County. I'm writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on HB 2791.

I'm writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on HB 2791. I know several transgender individuals, and can't imagine how much lower their quality of life would be without adequate gender-affirming care. The protocols followed by many providers are evidence-based and proven not only to improve the lives of transgender people, but SAVE lives by helping align their bodies with their minds and hearts. This medical care brings about feelings of normalcy and balance to those who feel they were born in the wrong body.

Once again, I thank you for your time and for hearing my thoughts on this bill. I encourage you to vote NO on the passage of HB 2791, saving lives while doing so.



Timothy R. Graham  
Director of Government Relations & Legislative Affairs  
Written Testimony – Opponent  
House Committee on Health & Human Services  
House Bill 2791  
February 29, 2024

Chairperson Landwehr, members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to HB 2791.

A survey released by the Trevor Project organization in December of 2022 indicated that more than 50% of transgender and non-binary youth across the U.S. seriously considered suicide in 2021. The report of the survey notes, “States where lawmakers have aggressively pursued anti-trans legislation, have extraordinarily high levels of suicide risk.”

To put it simply, Kansas NEA believes that Senate Bill 2791 is dangerous to Kansas youth.

When transgender youth feel supported by their families and medical providers, they have better health outcomes. When they feel affirmed, they experience less suicidal thoughts and attempts, increased self-esteem, and more feelings of safety in their community. All of which impacts their ability to learn better in the classroom.

Kansas NEA believes in allowing Kansas youth the freedom to be themselves. We want all students to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their races, backgrounds, genders, or religions. We stand with Kansas children and their families, and we believe everyone should have the right to access the healthcare they need to survive and thrive.

We ask the committee to reject 2791.

Testimony - House Health and Human Services Committee  
HB2791 — Enacting the Forbidding Abuse Child Transitions Act  
Proponent Written-only testimony  
Trish O’Neal – on my own behalf  
February 29, 2024  
[oneal.trish@yahoo.com](mailto:oneal.trish@yahoo.com)

Madam Chair and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2791.

Despite what you may hear today, this is a very loving bill. This bill seeks to protect our state’s children.

There are many studies that would support the spirit of the bill. I hope there are de-transitioner here who bravely tell their stories. These are real people who know, deeply, the thoughts and feelings of the bill’s opponents and can relate that medical interventions for gender dysphoria can end up being worse than the dysphoria, itself.

We all know a child who wanted to be a cowboy, or a ballerina, or a princess. We all know a teen or young adult who changed their major in college. We all know somebody who majored in something totally different from the way they’re living their best life now.

It’s a reality that children and teens are not mentally or emotionally mature enough to really hear with their heart both sides, and obtain all the facts. There is a reason that minors are not allowed to use tanning beds in the state of Kansas; and there are 44 other states that also restrict tanning by age. As a certain child advocate says, minors cannot consent to gender transitioning.

Last year, arguing against a bill that would have allowed 16-year-olds to be assistant teachers at childcare facilities, Rep. Susan Ruiz stated that 16-18 year olds are not old enough. She said, “Speaking of brain development, the frontal lobe does not fully develop until you’re in your 20s. What does the frontal lobe do? It’s about executive decisions.” Also, she asked “Do you think a 16-year-old or even an 18-year-old is going to know what to do?” (Veto Session, April 27, 2023, regarding HB 2344).

Today, we’re looking at medical interventions on children under the age of 18, with potentially life-changing, life-altering, long-term effects. There is research that some long-term effects are detrimental to health and development. The surgeries can deform, cause a person to lose lifetime sexual functions, sexual feeling, or even desire. Is that the down-side we’re willing to risk?

The bills heard today, protect well-meaning parents. Well-meaning parents may give in to a child desiring to gender transition out of love, their own beliefs, and without enough information about the risks. But, these two bills heard today allow a pause in the interventions. Allow young heads and hearts and sexual function to mature. These bills protect children and teens suffering from gender dysphoria from the doctors, hospitals, and big pharma, who may see our Kansas teens as a lifetime of additional income.

These bills deserve passage out of the committee and deserve to be enacted as law.

February 26, 2024/Written Only/Opposition

Dear Chairperson Landwehr and Members of the Committee,

As a mother and local church pastor, it grieves my heart to see our elected officials working against the health and well-being of vulnerable children in Kansas. **Every child is made in God's image**, bearing the imprint of love and hope. When we treat some children as second-class citizens, unworthy of medical care which is readily available to other children, I believe it grieves the heart of God. **We can do better.**

**House Bills 2791 is not the best we can do for our children.**

Medical care for gender dysphoria is evidence-based, medically necessary, and safe - which is why **every major medical association advocates against bills like these**. Patients, families, and their doctors should have the freedom to make their own private medical decisions—not politicians. Trans youth deserve the same chance to thrive as their peers—but these bills single trans youth out for unequal treatment, allowing cisgender and intersex youth **access to the same exact care these bills ban for trans youth**.

Gender-affirming care is life-saving care. These dangerous efforts to control our bodies and our families threaten the wellbeing of our children, the safety of our communities, and the ability of every family to determine what's best for their child.

Restrictions on this care are opposed by medical bodies and organizations across the country who consistently warn such policies threaten the lives of transgender young people. Gender-affirming care is individualized to meet the needs of each patient, managed through a careful and evidence-based model of assessment and informed consent—**which is already required by law**.

Every form of treatment prohibited under these bills is also accessed by non-transgender young people to treat other conditions, **but this bill only bans them for trans youth**. Politicians are risking the lives of young Kansans by forcing their way between them and their doctors and **forcing doctors to do their job as the legislature dictates—rather than as the best practice standards of care for their medical field instruct them to**.

While this bill may appear to only target access to gender-affirming healthcare, **it is written extremely broadly—such that it could have significant additional harmful consequences**. The bill does not define what it means to “promote,” “provide,” or “advocate” for social transition or gender affirming medical care—meaning not only will mental and medical health professionals be impacted by this bill, but it could also disrupt school counselors, teachers, daycare providers, etc., who interact with trans youth. The language of the bill clearly discriminates against transgender Kansans and **raises constitutional concerns about state employee's free speech rights**.

Please send these bills back to the drawing board – or to the round file trash can where they belong.

In peace,  
Rev. Dr. Valerie Miller-Coleman  
Kansas Interfaith Action

PRIVATE CITIZEN  
02-27-24  
vgvproper@gmail.com

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, I am grateful for the time you've given me to share my thoughts on HB 2791 with you today. My name is Valerie Roper and I am a voter in Douglas County. I am writing today to urge the committee to vote no on the passage of HB 2791.

I didn't know much about transgender health care until a few years ago when I came to know some transgender adults as well as a few parents of transgender children in our congregation. Discussions with them became more personally relevant after a youth in my large extended family identified as transgender a year later. I have been learning a lot through this time, as have these families. I have seen caring families anguished when their children were bullied in school and on social media, sometimes leading to their child's serious, even life-threatening depression. I have seen a trans child's life turn around when they were given gender-affirming care, leading to improvement in their overall well-being and a huge improvement in their scholastic performance. I have learned what can happen when medical professionals turn transgender youth away, and what can happen when gender-affirming care is provided.

HB 2791 short title includes the phrase "enacting the forbidding abusive child transitions act." Yet it is the denial of gender-affirming care for trans children which is actually child abuse. In banning the health care they need, it sends a message that they are "less than," insignificant, not acceptable being trans. It sends that message not only to them and their families, but to the larger community as well, leading to increased bullying and violence like the recent killing of the trans youth Nex Benedict in Oklahoma. HB 2791 language reveals no understanding of transgender children and their medical needs, nor of the wealth of research and professionalism of the current medical treatment available for them. HB 2791 would perpetuate misunderstanding, division and fear of the "other." Is this truly what we seek for the people of Kansas?

Here are the facts other have noted and which ring true in what I've learned these past few years:

- Gender-affirming care is life-saving medical care.
- Gender-affirming medical care is evidence-based, medically necessary and supported by every major medical association. There is no need to ban it.
- Patients, families, and their doctors should be the decision makers for private medical decisions. These are highly individualized decisions based on the needs of each patient. (Aren't those the decision makers we seek for ourselves when we need medical care, and don't we want those decisions to be highly individualized to meet our unique needs?) These complex decisions are not properly the purview of politicians.
- Trans youth deserve the same chance as their peers.

I urge you to let these truths guide you in your consideration of HB 2791 and bring a decision to vote no on its passage. If you vote no, you will be preventing the child abuse that HB 2791 would



institute. You would also be supporting a greater understanding of trans youth and helping to minimize divisive fears of those "who are not like us" which too often lead to violence. Please take that positive path.

Thank you again for this opportunity to share a bit of my learning path so far and my hopes for the future of Kansas.

HB 2791  
Veronica Holtz  
PRIVATE CITIZEN  
2/27/2024  
veronicaleeholtz@gmail.com  
WRITTEN ONLY  
OPPONENT

Chairman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, thank you for providing me the opportunity to share my thoughts on HB 2791. My name is Veronica Holtz and I am a voter in Sedgwick County. I'm writing you today to ask you to please vote NO on HB 2791.

Time and time again we've seen how laws like this one hurt young people. Families and professionals agree: Gender-affirming care is life-saving care. Moreover, The bill appears to discriminate against transgender individuals in Kansas and may raise constitutional issues regarding free speech rights for state employees.

Please do the right thing and protect Kansas youth! Vote NO on HB 2791. Thank you.