



February 14, 2023; 8:30 am

Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare

Sen. Beverly Gossage, Chair

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Opponent Testimony, Oral In-Person

SB12 -- Enacting the Kansas "child mutilation" prevention act to criminalize performing gender reassignment surgery or prescription of hormone replacement therapy on certain persons and providing grounds for unprofessional conduct for healing arts licensees.

Chair Gossage and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on SB12.

Year after year, many members of the Kansas Legislature have championed bills that minimize, bully and irrevocably harm vulnerable children. The supporters of SB12 espouse harmful rhetoric handed down by outside interests and national think tanks. It has been insisted by those supporters that they are concerned with our children's mental, emotional, and physical health.

Gender-affirming care is medically necessary, safe, effective, and—as the only evidence-based care for treating trans youth—it can literally save lives. LGBTQ youth are twice as likely to attempt suicide than their straight/cisgender peers. Transgender and gender nonconforming children and adults are more likely to be bullied, attacked and murdered. According to the Human Rights Campaign and Forbes, 2021 was the deadliest year on record for transgender and gender nonconforming people with at least 375 violent murders reported.

Gender affirming care for youth mostly consists of access to mental health care and counseling; puberty blockers, which allow families and their medical providers time to consider the right course of action before the development of permanent secondary sex characteristics, i.e. puberty; and hormone treatments or hormone replacement therapy. All of these forms of care are safe and reversible. NO prepubescent trans children are receiving gender affirming surgeries—a fact that supporters of this bill have willfully chosen to ignore.

Instead of protecting children, this bill would allow politicians to take away a parent's right to make medical decisions for their own children, flying in the face of all current, respected medical research and recommendations from their own medical professionals. Not only that, it would

strip that right from legal adults, age 18-21, and criminalize providers who want to provide this medically necessary, safe, evidence-based care. A vote in favor of SB12 is a clear message to transgender children that they do not matter. It is designed to erase the most vulnerable among us.

When taking office, you swore a solemn oath to the people of Kansas to faithfully discharge the duties of your elected position. Please find the heart, empathy, and courage to protect all of your constituents.

I urge you to oppose SB12.