

Lisa Cataldi

From: Nikole Barnes, LICSW <nbarneslcsw@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 7, 2024 2:06 PM
To: House Education Committee
Subject: Testimony Against HB 7781

Dear House Education Committee,

My name is Nikole Barnes and I the president of Radically Thrive Therapy, LLC and a proud parent of a transgender child. My private practice serves the LGBTQAI+ community and specifically focuses on the trauma experienced by transgender and gender non conforming individuals.

I am writing to express my deep concern and opposition to House Bill 7781, the Parents Bill of Rights Act. As a parent of a nonbinary transgender child, I believe that this bill undermines the rights and well-being of families like mine and threatens to harm vulnerable individuals who deserve protection and support.

House Bill 7781 purports to affirm the rights of parents to direct the upbringing, education, and care of their minor children. While this may sound commendable in theory, in practice, this legislation poses significant risks to the safety and autonomy of transgender youth.

As a parent, I wholeheartedly support the rights of parents to be involved in their children's lives and decisions. However, this bill goes beyond protecting parental rights and instead seeks to impose unnecessary and harmful restrictions, particularly on transgender youth and their access to essential healthcare services.

One of the most troubling aspects of House Bill 7781 is its requirement for parental consent for healthcare services provided to minor children. While it is understandable that parents should be involved in their children's healthcare decisions, this requirement can be harmful and potentially life-threatening for transgender youth who may not have supportive or understanding parents.

Forcing transgender youth to obtain parental consent for essential healthcare services, such as gender-affirming care, can result in significant delays or denial of care, leading to increased rates of depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. Transgender youth already face disproportionate rates of discrimination, harassment, and violence, and this bill further exacerbates their vulnerability by denying them access to life-saving healthcare services.

Moreover, House Bill 7781 fails to recognize the autonomy and agency of transgender youth, who should have the right to make informed decisions about their own bodies and healthcare needs, in consultation with competent medical professionals. By imposing arbitrary barriers to healthcare access, this bill disregards the best interests of transgender youth and undermines their dignity and rights as individuals.

As a parent of a nonbinary transgender child, I urge you to oppose House Bill 7781 and any similar legislation that threatens the rights and well-being of transgender youth. Instead of perpetuating discrimination and stigma, we should be supporting policies that promote inclusivity, respect, and equality for all individuals, regardless of their gender identity.

Thank you for considering my perspective on this important issue. I trust that you will prioritize the rights and dignity of transgender youth and oppose any legislation that seeks to undermine their well-being.

Sincerely,

Nikole Barnes,LICSW



Nikole Barnes,LICSW ([*she/her/hers*](#))

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