

The Quorum

March 2022

Threats to the Health of Transgender Youth

On February 22nd, Texas Governor Greg Abbott told state health agencies that medical treatments provided to transgender adolescents should be classified as “child abuse” under existing state law. These statements were made in a letter to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and followed an opinion by Attorney General Ken Paxton that said providing medical treatments such as puberty suppressing drugs and hormone replacement therapy to transgender teenagers should be investigated as child abuse.

Subsequently, TX officials began investigating parents of transgender adolescents, one of the first being a parent and employee of the state protective services agency who has a 16-year-old transgender child. The ACLU took the case and is currently trying to stop the inquiry.

In response to this most recent attack on transgender youth, the AAP released a statement noting a strong opposition to “the actions taken in Texas that directly threaten the health and well-being of transgender youth.” Moreover, the AAP stated that “studies show that gender-affirming care can reduce emotional distress, improve [transgender youth’s] sense of well-being, and reduce the risk of suicide.”

Unfortunately, TX isn’t the only state pushing policy to threaten the wellbeing and health of LGBTQ+ youth and their families. Below is an overview of the innumerable anti-trans policies that are ongoing throughout the US. Note that while some of these bills have passed at least one house or senate in the legislature, they have not been enacted into law.

Arizona: AZ introduced two bills, SB 1165 and SB 1130, which prevents transgender youth from participating in sports and criminalizes gender-affirming care, respectively.

Arkansas: The AR legislature passed HB 1570 in spring of 2021, which was the first bill in the country that would effectively ban transgender youth from receiving gender affirming care. In July 2021, a federal judge issued a temporary injunction, and the law has yet to go into effect.

Florida: The Florida Senate passed the “Don’t Say Gay or Trans” bill (HB 1557) on March 8th, which would block teachers from talking about LGBTQ+ issues or people, further stigmatizing LGBTQ+ people and isolating LGBTQ+ students. The bill is now awaiting Governor DeSantis ‘s signature.

Georgia: The GA Senate passed SB 435, which would discriminate against transgender youth and prevent them from participating in sports alongside their peers.

Indiana: The IN Senate passed HB 1041, which would effectively ban transgender youth from partaking in sports alongside their peers.

Kentucky: The KY Senate passed SB 83, which would ban transgender youth from playing sports consistent with their gender identity.

South Dakota: The SD House passed SB 46 and HB 1005, an anti-transgender sports ban and bill that would prohibit transgender students from using multi-occupancy public school facilities consistent with their gender identity, respectively.

Utah: The Utah House passed HB 11, a bill that discriminates against transgender youth in participation of school sports.

Sources:

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<https://www.hrc.org/news/action-alert-stop-anti-trans-legislation-in-arizona>

<https://www.hrc.org/news/florida-senate-passes-dont-say-gay-or-trans-bill-legislation-heads-to-desantis-desk-for-signature-or-veto>

The Quorum is a monthly policy spotlight. For any inquiries, please email Chapter 2 legislative and policy analyst, Karinne Van Groningen, at KVanGroningen@mednet.ucla.edu

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