

Letter from South Carolina Medical Providers Who Oppose Anti-Transgender Healthcare Bans

South Carolina General Assembly,

As medical professionals serving South Carolina families, we have an obligation to speak out against any barrier that prohibits our patients from receiving the care they need. That is why today, we are joining together to urge South Carolina lawmakers to reject S.627, S.274, S.243, H.3551, H.3730, and any legislation that bans medical care for transgender people.

These bills all vary slightly (including banning care through the ages of 18, 21, or 26) but all would have the same effect: **They would put the lives and well-being of transgender people at risk and create a dangerous precedent of banning necessary medical care for the people who need it to thrive and be healthy.**

In our practices, we can attest to the lifesaving impact of affirming, inclusive medical care for all people – including transgender patients. Gender-affirming care is medically necessary care that helps transgender people be safe, seen, and comfortable in who they are. Access to this care allows transgender people to thrive and experience joy living as their authentic selves.

At least one of these bills would explicitly criminalize doctors and the important medical care we provide – by mandating arrests and jail time for simply providing medically necessary care for transgender people, in accordance with the oath we have taken to care for our patients.

It is unprecedented and dangerous for the government to single out a group of people to deny them medically necessary care. Medical care should be prescribed and guided by doctors, not banned by politicians.

This view is shared and affirmed by nearly every leading medical expert and association. The American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Academy of Family Medicine, all agree that supporting transgender people with affirming care is a medical best practice and critical to ensuring the health and well-being of transgender people.

In considering these bills, state lawmakers run the risk of dire consequences to the health and wellbeing of thousands of South Carolinians and their families – who you represent.

If medical providers are blocked from administering care, many of our patients may resort to self-prescribed and self-administered hormone use, which can be dangerous without oversight of a physician. Banning medical care can also heighten rates of depression, social isolation, self-hatred, self-harm, and suicidal thoughts or behaviors.

Simply put: The stakes are too high to even consider legislation that positions the health and wellbeing of our patients – and your constituents – as a divisive political issue.

Transgender people can thrive – and are currently thriving – when they can access the medical care they need without barriers, discrimination, or stigma.

We ask that you not interfere with the care that we offer our patients – and that you leave medical treatment to the experts, not politicians. **Please, reject S.627, S.274, S.243, H.3551, H.3730, and any bill like it.**

See Signatories on Next Page

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