

Article on Transgender and child abuse

Gender affirming care for transgender children is not child abuse

We strongly condemn recent actions by Texas Governor Greg Abbott to classify gender affirming care for transgender children as child abuse.

Gender-affirming care for transgender children is not child abuse. It is, in fact, a demonstration of love and acceptance. These policies clearly contradict known outcomes for transgender children and deny them the appropriate care experts recognize as essential to their individual needs. We know that transgender children have a high risk of depression, thoughts of suicide and attempted suicide. By denying them gender affirming care, these risks are likely to increase.

Equating gender affirming care with child abuse is a direct assault on child protection laws. It diverts child protection resources from legitimate reports of suspected child abuse, thereby further endangering children. This action will require Texas doctors, nurses, teachers, and other adults in contact with transgender children to report gender affirming care as abuse to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or face possible criminal penalties. This is a serious misrepresentation of essential child protection efforts.

The Greater Bay Area Child Abuse Prevention Coalition joins California leaders in denouncing the Texas action. California State Senator Scott Wiener has said, "California will always have the backs of LGBTQ youth & their families." San Francisco Mayor London Breed agrees saying, "we will continue to support all of our LGBTQ youth, the parents who love them, and our entire trans community." Trent Rhorer, Executive Director of the San Francisco Human Services Agency and Cathy Senderling Executive Director of the California's County Welfare Directors Association noted the pernicious effect of this action saying, "calling on child welfare agencies for political purposes when abuse or neglect are not present runs the risk of pulling our already limited staff resources away from vulnerable children and youth who are victims of, or at risk of, abuse and neglect."

The Greater Bay Area Child Abuse Prevention Coalition is dedicated to strengthening families and ending child abuse. We strongly urge Governor Abbot and Texas lawmakers to reject attempts to exploit laws intended to protect children from harm. Instead, we encourage them to support gender-affirming care for transgender children as a vital tool to keep kids safe and promote healthy, strong families.

Sincerely,

Carol Carrillo, MSW

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