

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS SHEILA KUEHL
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April 5, 2022

Supporting Affirming Care and Inclusion for LGBTQ+ Youth and Their Families

On February 22, 2022, Texas Governor Greg Abbot directed the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services to investigate as "child abuse" any report it receives that indicate a child is receiving gender-affirming treatments. The deeply harmful impacts that this order will bring about cannot be overstated. Such an order flies in the face of all that we know about best practices when it comes to supporting children and young adults to discover who they are and feel secure in their sense of self. Governor Abbott's order perpetuates damaging ideas about trans and gender non-conforming youth and seeks to punish parents who are trying to do right by their children. LGBTQ+ youth are overrepresented in the child welfare system in part because they experience family rejection due to their identities. Caregivers who support youth with affirming care should in no way be labeled as abusive. This order is discriminatory, harmful, and just plain cruel.

In the article, [Family Acceptance in Adolescence and the Health of LGBT Young](#)

MOTION

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KUEHL	_____
HAHN	_____
BARGER	_____
MITCHELL	_____

[Adults](#) (Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing), researchers found that “family acceptance in adolescence is associated with young adult positive health outcomes (self- esteem, social support, and general health) and is protective for negative health outcomes (depression, substance abuse, and suicidal ideation and attempts)” (Ryan et. al 2010). Numerous studies have echoed these findings.

To be clear, the directive is not about protecting trans kids. It is about denying their existence and cutting off access to life-saving treatment. Transphobia and homophobia are the driving factors behind this effort and others like it across the country. In Florida, legislation known by opponents as the “Don’t Say Gay” bill was just signed into law by Governor Ron DeSantis (R) on March 28. The “Parental Rights in Education” bill prohibits not only “instruction” around gender identity and sexual orientation, but also “classroom discussion” of these topics. It states, in part: “Classroom instruction by school personnel or third parties on sexual orientation or gender identity may not occur in kindergarten through grade 3 or in a manner that is not age appropriate or developmentally appropriate for students in accordance with state standards”. The kind of school environment imagined in this legislation is one that is uncomfortable, unsafe, unwelcoming, and toxic for *all* students and staff alike, particularly those who identify as LGBTQ+. If passed, it will perpetuate a culture of bullying, secrecy, shame, and fear. Schools should be spaces that foster open discussion, critical thinking, meaningful engagement, and the safe exploration of ideas. The implementation of this bill would create an atmosphere that stifles such a culture, and stifles learning itself.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief

Executive Officer (CEO) to suspend all travel to the States of Texas and Florida for the conduct of County business unless the Chief Executive Officer determines that the failure to authorize such travel would seriously harm the County's interests; this ban is to be lifted upon the suspension of either of the bills or orders above.

S:LP_SupportingAffirmingCareandInclusionforLGBTQ+YouthandTheirFamilies