

Testimony (abbreviated) by Chloe Cole Before U.S. Congress
Thursday, July 27, 2023

My name is Chloe Cole and I am a de-transitioner. I used to believe that I was born in the wrong body and the adults in my life, whom I trusted, affirmed my belief, and this caused me **lifelong, irreversible harm**. I speak to you as a victim of **one of the biggest medical scandals in American history**. I hope that you will have the courage to bring this scandal to an end, and ensure that other vulnerable teenagers and children don't go through what I went through.

At the age of 12, I began to experience what my medical team would later diagnose as gender dysphoria. I was well into early puberty and very uncomfortable with the changes that were happening to my body. I told my parents I was transgender and they were immediately concerned. They felt like they needed to get outside help from medical professionals. **But this proved to be a mistake. It immediately set our entire family down a path of ideologically motivated deceit and coercion.** The general specialist I was taken to told my parents that I needed to be put on puberty-blocking drugs immediately.

They asked my parents: Would you rather have a dead daughter or a living transgender son? I was fast-tracked onto puberty blockers and then testosterone. The resulting menopausal-like hot flashes made focusing on school impossible. But they were far worse when I was on the blockers. At 13, I had my first testosterone injection. **It has caused permanent changes in my body.**

At 15 I had a double mastectomy. There was nothing wrong with my still-developing body, or my breasts other than that, as an insecure teenage girl, I felt awkward about it. After my breasts were taken away from me, the tissue was incinerated. **I had a huge part of my future womanhood taken from me.** I will never be able to breastfeed. I have massive scars across my chest and the skin grafts are weeping fluid today.

After surgery, my grades plummeted. Nothing I went through addressed my underlying mental health issues. The drugs and surgeries changed my body, but they could not change the basic reality that I am, and forever will be, a female.

I wasn't suicidal. I was a happy child who struggled because she was different. However, **at 16, after my surgery, I did become suicidal. I didn't need to be lied to.** I needed compassion, love and therapy to help me work through my issues, not told that all my problems would be solved by transforming into a boy. We need to stop telling 12-year-olds that they were born wrong, that they should reject their own bodies and feel uncomfortable with their own skin. Puberty is a rite of passage, not a disease to be mitigated.

My childhood was ruined along with thousands of de-transitioners that I know through our networks. This needs to stop and you can stop it. Enough children have already been victimized by this barbaric pseudoscience. Thank you.

**Wisconsin Senate Health Committee: Request Support for SB407, Healthy Aging Grants
10/12/2023**

Thank you for the opportunity to address your committee. I am here to request your support for SB407. My name is LaVerne Jaros. I'm the board president of the Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging, retired and a resident of Kenosha County.

Years ago, Kenosha, like other Wisconsin counties was on a wait list for Family Care, a program that provides care in the community for Medicaid-eligible elders and persons with disabilities. I remember thinking, "If we can't get Family Care, let's at least try to reduce the number of people needing long term care." That ignited our involvement with the state and university to find and test programs to prevent injuries and avoid or slow the rate of conditions that trigger the need for long term care—like hip fractures due to falls, or managing chronic conditions like diabetes, arthritis, heart disease and even incontinence.

We wanted to be good stewards of public dollars so we wanted to see evidence that programs worked. Eventually we found that evidence, and with state and federal support, a statewide network of proven prevention programs was launched to help older people reduce falls, manage their chronic conditions, stay healthy and independent. Today the non-profit Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (WIHA) along with statewide partners are offering classes like Stepping On which has demonstrated a 31% reduction in falls; Healthy Living with Diabetes which reduced A1C levels and cut emergency department visits by 51% and Mind Over Matter that resulted in a 71% improvement in bladder symptoms. There are also programs to increase physical activity, manage pain and guide family caregivers.

These programs address some of the biggest drivers of local calls for emergency medical service, emergency department visits, hospital admissions, nursing home placements and deaths among the elderly. Our rural and urban fire departments have experienced increased fall-related calls for lift-assist or transport, further taxing their strained departments. These conditions also impact family members' own well-being and their ability to fully participate in the workforce.

A one-time investment in Healthy Aging Grants would help WIHA and its community partners re-build and strengthen their program delivery capacity, post pandemic, strengthen the statewide and local falls free coalitions and help build a more robust, sustainable and consumer-accessible virtual Falls Free Wisconsin Center.

I hope we will have your support of Healthy Aging Grants for a stronger, safer and healthier Wisconsin--as we all grow old. Thank you.

LaVerne Jaros
324 116th Street
Pleasant Prairie, WI 53158

Senate Bill 480

I so desperately wish I hadn't received an email this morning including the phrase "same room as last week" from a trans advocacy organization. I am so bone dead tired of defending the integrity of trans individuals. I'm tired of receiving tear-filled phone calls from my spouse that another piece of dehumanizing legislation has been introduced in the state we call home – a state we hope to continue to call home but have started to have doubts, especially as I am not only a trans person, but also a health care provider operating under a scope of practice to prescribe and monitor medications in pursuit of the highest care of patients.

As a healthcare practitioner, I consider myself an asset to our state, but that state has repaid me by introducing and passing legislation that is transparently – and believe me, the entire trans community is understanding the message – moving to eradicate myself and people like me.

I went to many years of school to gain the knowledge and expertise needed to care for patients, and a number of years in post-graduate training as well. I have earned the right to call myself an expert in my field. I frequently tell my patients that with my expertise in medication management and their expertise in their own life, we can work together to find a treatment that meets their needs. And now the state government is trying to wedge itself into my exam room, with restrictions that run absolutely counter to the established evidence base. This is an absolute insult to healthcare providers.

A somewhat overlooked aspect of this bill is that the investigatory and corrective duties of this prohibition lies with the Boards of the respective healthcare professions. This was curious to me. I was informed by my healthcare colleagues that Board members are typically appointed by the governor upon the recommendation of private healthcare professional organizations. I was shocked to learn that not all Board members are healthcare professionals; for example the current Wisconsin Medical Examining Board has three public members who are not physicians. Make no mistake, Boards are far from apolitical, and this bill will take medical decisions out of the hands of patients and healthcare professionals and into the hands of unelected, non-experts, with who-knows-what motivations and affiliations.

I'd like to specifically address a certain bit of language in this bill: that these prohibitions do *not* apply to "any procedure undertaken because the minor suffers from a physical disorder, physical injury, or physical illness that would, as certified by a physician, place the minor in imminent danger of death or impairment". How, *how* can this legislative body not see that the restriction of gender-affirming care will cause significant mental health consequences that will place our children "in imminent danger of death or impairment"? Kids will die if they cannot access affirming care, that I guarantee.

Youth in our society are in what experts call a "suicide epidemic" and access to gender-affirming care is identified time and again as preventative for suicide in our youth. It is incredibly unclear to me who this law is trying to protect. I see it as a message to our most vulnerable youth that they are not welcome in the state of Wisconsin; but for any trans person who sees this – that is not true. You are welcomed, loved, and celebrated by so many Wisconsinites. The writers of this bill, despite their title, do not represent us, the people.

For so many reasons, you must do the honorable thing and vote no on SB480.

Anna Marceau
Middleton, WI

Isabelle Marceau
Middleton
53562

My name is Isa Marceau, my pronouns are she/they, I am a resident of Middleton, and I am the youth minister at St Dunstan's Episcopal Church in Madison. The only responsible choice today is to vote no on SB480. I am going to tell you about ways I provide gender affirming care in my youth program.

I ask my kids their correct name, correct pronouns, and when it is correct to use them. We frequently reintroduce ourselves using both name and pronouns, especially when guests are present. There is no dress code other than, "please wear a coat when it's cold." Menstruation products are clearly labeled as such in a common area. All our bathrooms are gender neutral, and when we are in public, I make sure they know they can treat them as such because I've got their backs. On overnights, I don't split up the group into genders, I just make sure the space is big enough for everyone. And, it is made abundantly clear to parents & adult volunteers involved that this group is for every child of God, nevermind the details.

In short, my goal is to "to create an environment of safety in which emotions, questions, and concerns can be explored," as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

So I want to ask you, when do these laws start to affect my youth program and the holy, safe haven I am able to give the children in my church and wider community?

And I can tell you, it does right now.

During evening compline and bimonthly office hours, I have the distinct honor to hear about sports, friendships, performances, tryouts, classes, college applications, and grappings with identity. I hear how they view the world and how the world is treating them. I hear immense concern for family and friend, environment and community. I am so blessed to be trusted by them.

You know what I don't hear about? Their medical decisions. Because that is not my place and I am not their doctor.

As lawmakers, it isn't your place either. All we can do, as adults in positions of significant power, is research and deference to the adults whose place it *is* and who *are* experts in this field. ^{give}

I am staying in my lane by researching and listening to the experts on the matter of social, psychological, behavioral, and medical interventions in regards to gender affirming care.

If you do the same, you will vote NO on the reckless, heartless, arrogant bill called SB480.



DAN FEYEN

STATE SENATOR

18th Senate District
(608) 266-5300
Sen.Feyen@legis.wi.gov

PO Box 7882, Madison, WI 53707-7882
<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/18/feyen>

To: The Senate Committee on Health
From: Sen. Dan Feyen
Re: Senate Bill 407

Hello Chair and members of the committee, thank you for taking the time to hear testimony on SB 407.

According to the CDC, Wisconsin has the highest rate of deadly falls among older adults in the country. Between 2018 and 2020, there were 4,986 deaths due to falls among the Wisconsinites 65 years and older. This is nearly triple the total all-ages number of motor vehicle deaths.

Each year, it is estimated that 1 in 4 people aged 65 or older suffers a fall. When an older person falls, the impact is felt throughout the community. In 2021 there were 43,000 emergency department visits due to falls. Hospitalization costs totaled more than \$427 million that year. An estimated \$1 billion is spent annually on falls-related health costs in Wisconsin. This includes both Medicaid and out-of-pocket expenses. With Wisconsin's aging population, we can only expect these numbers to rise.

Thankfully, falls are not an inevitable part of old age. Research has shown that people are able to reduce their risk of falls through physical activity and other preventative strategies.

SB407 recreates and refocuses the Healthy Aging Grant program at DHS to provide funding for the Falls Free Wisconsin initiative.

The grant will be awarded to a private non-private entity that takes an all-encompassing approach to falls prevention. With a list of boxes that need to be checked in order to qualify, such as coordinating efforts to reduce falls, training and working with county departments and other service agencies, coordinating with DHS on policy issues, raising public awareness on falls prevention, and implementing evidence-based health programs for older adults.

This grant will help to lower hospital and emergency department visits and will help Wisconsin's elderly take a proactive approach to their health. Thank you very much for holding a public hearing on this bill.

October 12, 2023

Senator Cabral-Guevara and Members of the Senate Health Committee
Room 323 South, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53707

I am pleased and honored to be invited to appear before you to present myself for your consideration of my appointment to the University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority Board of Directors and thank you for your time and attention today. I deeply appreciate the opportunity to appear before you virtually as I was unable to join you last week.

As one of three nominations for appointment by the Governor, I join a statutorily defined authority of Chapter 233 of Wisconsin State Statutes. I understand and appreciate that my role is that of a public member not affiliated with any of the other represented entities. I am particularly eager to serve in the luxury of an absence of consideration of politics.

I joined the Authority Board late in 2022 having availed myself to whatever materials were readily available. I have attended all meetings fully prepared to participate in any way that was appropriate. As you know, I recently retired following twenty years of service as a legislator serving on numerous committees and task forces. While my primary focus was that of K-12 public education, I have dealt with a broad spectrum of perspectives on healthcare and providers, hospitals, workforce matters, issues of insurance, finance, management, and budgets. Like each of you, I come to this role with a set of personal experiences to guide me with decades of information gathered from the public presented at countless public hearings, personal and family experiences, and general knowledge of the issues shaping healthcare in general. I bring the knowledge and experience of serving on a broad spectrum of boards within numerous organizations, the most recent being the Patient and Family Partnership Council Board and the Agrace Hospice Ethics Committee in particular. As a former business owner, I also bring an understanding and deep appreciation of the importance of mission, strategic planning, adherence to ethics, and fiduciary responsibility. I accept these responsibilities with a strong desire to continue providing service to the State of Wisconsin.

Prior to my service in the legislature, I was employed in various aspects of non-profit and public service work in foundations, associations, and organizations. I have a great deal of leadership experience through many of these organizations from founding president of a statewide organization to membership on numerous boards and executive committees. I intimately understand the responsibilities and duties of becoming an effective board member whose purpose is to create, guide and fulfill a clearly defined mission. I have embraced the work of this board and look forward to the opportunity to continue to support and uphold the vital work and service provided by the University Hospital and Clinics.

Again, I thank you for your time and attention and look forward to appearing before you.

Sondy Pope

STEPHANIE R. HILTON

217 Island Drive ● Madison, WI 53705 ● (608) 345-3570 ● stephanieraehilton@gmail.com

Good morning, Chairperson Cabral-Guevara and committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. My name is Stephanie Hilton, and I was appointed to serve as a public member of the Medical Examining Board this past spring.

I believe my experience as a prosecutor and a patient makes me well-suited to serve as a Public Member of this Board.

As a prosecutor, public safety is the core function of my job. In carrying out my role of public protection, I apply the law to the facts of each case and determine if criminal charges can and should be issued. This experience has already translated to my role as a Board Member by focusing on public protection when reviewing cases that come before the Board for a decision.

I specialize in prosecuting sensitive crimes like sexual assault. Working with survivors of sexual assault and prosecuting these cases provides helpful context and background for evaluating cases before the Board involving complaints against doctors, particularly regarding sexual assault or any inappropriate conduct. Wisconsin doctors are expected to act with honesty, respect for the law, reasonable judgment, competence, and respect patient boundaries. When they don't, it is the role of the Board to review these violations and administer appropriate consequences. Similarly to my job as a prosecutor, as a Public Member of this Board I view my role as being a voice for the public.

My experience as a patient also informs my role as a Board Member. I am fortunate to have good providers and the tools to advocate for me and my family's best care. I want to make sure everyone has the same thing regardless of where they live or which doctor they see.

I've lived and worked in many communities across our state. I believe this provides valuable insight when considering matters before the board and allows me to better represent the interests of all Wisconsinites.

Thank you for your consideration of my appointment to the Medical Examining Board.

Stephanie R. Hilton

Personal Statement

Good Morning Madame chair and Members of the Senate Committee on Health. My name is Lubna Majeed -Haqqi and I would like to thank you for your invitation today.

I am a physician practicing in Wisconsin since 2000, I am currently a senior partner with Midwest Nephrology Associates and I provide services for kidney failure, Dialysis, Diabetes and Hypertension related complications as well Acute kidney injury encountered in hospital and critical care setting.

I hold fellowships in Critical Care and Nephrology. I am trained in vascular access procedures and provide coverage at the Midwest Surgery Center. I currently serve as Medical Director at two Fersenius Dialysis units, where I lead day-to-day operations, tracks goals and objectives, as well as write and implement policies and procedures.

During my years of practice I have faced many challenges, not the least of them presented by the three years of the covid pandemic. My colleagues and I fought the pandemic and cared for our sick patients face to face and on a daily basis. I was forced to isolate myself from family members while working at the hospital at the height of the pandemic and lived with the very real fear of infecting my loved ones as the virus raged in my workplace.

Through all the intense demands of my profession with the years of school and training, on call weekends and nights, I have to say that I still love being a doctor and given another chance I would do exactly the same. I also love Wisconsin which has been my home for 23 years. My husband and I are raising our twins together who are seniors at Brookfield Central High School.

I am passionate about patient care and as a member of Wisconsin Medical Examining Board I would like to serve the people of Wisconsin and give back to the community that is my home. I hope to adhere to the highest standards of public service during my tenure and I am grateful for this opportunity.

End Domestic Abuse WI
1400 E Washington Ave., Suite 227
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(608) 237-3985
jennag@endabusewi.org



To: Members of the Senate Health Committee
Date: October 12th, 2023
From: Jenna Gormal, Director of Public Policy and Systems Change
Re: Opposition of SB 479, SB 480

Chairperson Cabral-Guevara and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. My name is Jenna Gormal, Director of Public Policy, representing End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin (End Abuse), the statewide voice for survivors of domestic violence and the membership organization representing local domestic violence victim service providers across Wisconsin's 72 counties. Please oppose SB 480 relating to: prohibiting transition medical intervention for individuals under 18 years of age.

Gender-affirming care – is medically necessary, evidence-based health care proven to reduce anxiety, depression, and suicide risks among trans youth and is supported across the mainstream of the medical community, including multiple national medical bodies. The best practice medical care for transgender youth delays the onset of puberty. This allows the young person more time to make decisions about their own body. This bill takes away that choice.

Denying best practice medical care to transgender youth can be life threatening. Transgender youth face high rates of family rejection, violence, discrimination, and suicidality. In 2015, 77 percent of transgender adults who were out or perceived as transgender while in grades K-12 reported negative experiences at school. These experiences included verbal or physical harassment, physical or sexual assault, or being prevented from dressing in accordance with their gender identity. Since transgender youth often experience severe discrimination and rejection, they often look for validation in an intimate partner. One study showed 50% of transgender individuals were raped or assaulted by a romantic partner.

The mere introduction of this legislation compounds upon the marginalization, isolation and violence experienced by our young people and sends a message that they are unwelcome, should fear living in the world as their whole selves, and, consequently, silence themselves. When we actively shame and encourage young people to be silent, we allow all kinds of violence and harm to thrive. We must not allow children to be targeted like this. Please oppose this unnecessary and harmful legislation and allow young people to live and be who they are. Medical decisions should be made according to the best medical practices, between health care providers, patients, and their families. Legislators should NOT interfere with those decisions.

if you have any questions about End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin's position on this issue, please contact me at 608.237.3985 or jennag@endabusewi.org.



ELLEN SCHUTT

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 31ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

October 12, 2023

Testimony on Senate Bill 476

Thank you Chairwoman Cabral-Guevara and committee members for hearing Senate Bill 476 today. This bill codifies current administrative code to allow Wisconsin-licensed health care providers and provider groups who are located outside the state of Wisconsin and offer telehealth services to patients in state to be able to be reimbursed in the medical assistance program.

Earlier this session, telehealth rules in Medicaid were finalized. Within the new rule, Department of Health Services (DHS) permits health care providers who do not have a physical location in the state of Wisconsin to apply for certification as a medical assistance provider in order to treat Medical Assistance recipients via telehealth, as long as the provider holds a Wisconsin license and is in good standing with their respective licensing board.

Wisconsin has taken great steps to provide medical assistance recipients with greater access to health care from Wisconsin-licensed health care providers who treat patients via telehealth. This is a critical need, as Wisconsin continues to face historic health care provider shortages. By broadening the network of available licensed providers, this legislation will reduce wait times for medical assistance recipients to receive care. This promotes successful health care outcomes and reduces the possibility of patients developing emergency conditions or worsening chronic illnesses.

This bill prohibits DHS from requiring a health care provider or group that is licensed, certified, registered, or otherwise authorized to provide health care services in this state and that exclusively offers health care services in this state through telehealth to maintain a physical address or site in this state to be eligible for enrollment as a certified provider under the medical assistance program.

This change is necessary in order to ensure the Wisconsin medical assistance program permanently modernizes provider and provider group enrollment rules to accommodate virtual care services.

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 476.

Good morning, and thank you all for the opportunity to speak about my interest and qualifications for being a member of the Naturopathic Medicine Examining Board. Right from the start, I'd like to say that it would be an honor to serve on this Board and help the people of Wisconsin have access to naturopathic medicine.

By way of my background and interests, I was born and raised in Wisconsin, and did my undergraduate and medical studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. During this time, I had an interest in learning about herbal medicine, had my first acupuncture treatment, and, just in general had an interest in learning about any system of healing that could be useful to patient care. After graduation, I matched into family medicine residency in Seattle, Washington, where naturopathic doctors have licensure, and some of my clinics employed naturopathic doctors. I even had the chance to teach at and work in a clinic for the naturopathic medical school, Bastyr University.

For me, this was all a very positive experience as I worked side-by-side with naturopathic doctors in providing patient care. Now I work in integrative medicine, a related field that involves mostly MDs who offer treatments similar in some ways to naturopathic medicine, treatments that patients may not otherwise be able to learn about from a health care provider. And, patients are asking for guidance about therapies such as herbal medicine and other dietary supplements, support for lifestyle changes including nutrition, and mind-body approaches to health and healing. I can tell you that most conventional health care providers don't have adequate access nor training to meet this patient need and interest. This is a primary motivation for me being involved in this Board, to help the people of Wisconsin to have access to this type of collaborative medicine, broadening out the options for patient care and treatments.

Thank you for your time, and I welcome any questions that you might have.

Sincerely,
David Kiefer, MD

Katarina Meister, ND
3510 N. Oakland Ave - #203
Shorewood, WI 53211
Cell Ph: 630-272-1047
drmeister@lakesidenaturalmedicine.com

October 4th, 2023

To: Senate Committee on Health

Thank you, chairperson, and members of the committee.

My name is Katarina Meister, and I am a licensed naturopathic doctor, practicing in Milwaukee for the last 2 years. I have been appointed to serve the Naturopathic Medicine Examining Board. I am confident that I am qualified to serve the state of Wisconsin and my profession. My testimony today will focus on my formal education and efforts towards serving my community and my profession.

I received my undergraduate training from The University of Iowa, and my Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine from Bastyr University, California graduating in 2021. My clinical experience at Bastyr University included providing naturopathic primary patient care as well as working alongside MDs at an integrative Urgent Care & Internal Medicine clinic. In both settings, I have seen first-hand how naturopathic medicine plays a major role in providing safe, reliable, and cost-effective primary care medicine alongside the conventional model.

After graduating, I decided to move closer to home when I learned Wisconsin was on the brink of licensure for naturopathic doctors. I have been a practicing naturopathic doctor in Wisconsin since 2021 at a group practice in Milwaukee. I hold an active naturopathic medical license in good standing in the state of Vermont. I continue to be an advocate for integrative medicine, and recently became a group administrator for the Milwaukee Integrative Medicine Group.

Since returning to Wisconsin, I have been actively involved in the Wisconsin Naturopathic Doctors Association (WNDA), specifically with their legislative board. I testified for Assembly Bill 529, and Senate Bill 532 relating to the regulation and licensure of naturopathic doctors. I have also actively spoken with state representatives and legislators with the WNDA for their lobby day.

My active involvement in legislative efforts has inspired me to take on a larger role, in serving the Naturopathic Medical Examining Board. As a member of this board, I can assist in providing a fresh perspective of the formal education, training, and standards of naturopathic medical practice, as a recent graduate. I am confident that I will make a great addition to the Naturopathic Medical Examining Board.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Katarina Meister N.D.

Katarina Meister, ND
Naturopathic Doctor

Dr. Shaheda Govani
Appointment on the Dentistry Examining Board
Senate Committee on Health Public Hearing | Thursday, October 12, 2023

I am interested in serving a second term on the Wisconsin Dentistry Examining Board. I currently serve as Vice Chairperson and feel I have a lot to contribute to our profession. Serving on the board has been one of the most educational experiences of my life and I feel I am making an impact to protect our patients and community at large. I am the credentialing and sedation liaison and strive to improve the application process, expedite the wait times and clarify the application forms as well as the rules to better serve our patients and the dentists we serve.

As a dentist with high ethics and a respectable service record, I know I will continue to bring value to the board. My experience will allow me to continue the critical work done by the DEB. I would be honored to continue to serve my home state of Wisconsin and Governor Evers with the goal of protecting our citizens.

After completing my Biology degree at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, I completed dental school at Marquette University. In 2010, I opened my own dental practice because I had the desire to provide quality dental care to my community. By choosing the path of my own start-up, I could ensure that my high standard of care would be met, and over the last eleven years, I have grown Govani Dental LLC proudly serving the Fox Valley area. I am aware of the challenges that face dentists, business owners and the patients we are lucky enough to serve.

I believe broadly in accountability of dentists to both their patients and to the profession of dentistry. I follow the principle that you should hold yourself to the highest standard. I have always valued adherence to rules and regulations. In addition, I enjoy learning about risk management and ethical challenges that the patient population face. Looking at provider behavior and patient interactions has always been a fascinating topic to me and I take joy in fostering others to be the best they can be for our field. Collectively all of these elements drive my passion for the field of dentistry.

My dedication to dentistry and my community has been acknowledged by multiple organizations. I am the recipient of the Wisconsin Dental Association's Pyramids of Pride Young Leadership Award and the Rotary President's Citation for my efforts serving the dental community. I have been inducted into the American College of Dentists, Pierre Fauchard, and International College of Dentists. I have served the Wisconsin Dental Association in multiple capacities from county level leadership, state membership committees, House of Delegate representative and my time with the Ethics Board. In my current free time, I have started a local foundation run program called *Govani Gives* that financially matches local non-profits and has started to also provide scholarships for local at need youth.

I find great pride in serving my community. I have been active with past board appointments for the Oshkosh United Way and the Oshkosh YMCA Board. I have past service to the Oshkosh Rotary for over ten years. Currently, I am involved locally with Woman Who Care of Oshkosh. At the state-level, I continue to mentor students interested in becoming dental professionals and help current dental students navigate through their training. I find great value in helping others find their path to practice dentistry in an ethical manner.

Please consider my request to serve a second term on the Wisconsin Dentistry Examining Board.

Sincerely,
Shaheda G.M. Govani DDS

I am a transgender individual who lives in Wisconsin and my community cares about my wellbeing and the wellbeing of anyone like me, including children.

While I did not have the opportunity to transition as a child, I do believe it would have impacted my life in a much better way than being forced to live a lie until I was nearly 30. I did not know what being transgender was as a child but my ignorance did not stop the feelings I felt. Children need to be nourished and uplifted as they navigate through life and what you are proposing will literally kill some of them. Science has proven how valuable gender affirming care is, especially with children and young adults. Children who receive gender affirming care have better mental health, succeed more in academic and extracurricular activities and generally are much more adjusted to live a productive life as an adult. I urge you to listen to the actual experts when it comes to things you do not know about. I understand how things can seem like they are happening suddenly, or they are a new trend, but we have been around since the beginning of time. Even in the bible there are examples of people going outside of the gender norms like Joseph wearing makeup, Deborah being a powerful judge or the various eunuchs mentioned in both the old and new testaments. I would like to reiterate, we just want to live our lives. We want to be able to receive the medical care that will literally save our lives. Thank you for listening to what I have to say and I sincerely hope it makes you reflect on what you are doing.

SB480 Public Testimony

From: Kevin Coleman

I come before the Senate today as the proud father of two wonderful children. I want to tell you about my 16 year old. They are a junior in high school, an A student, kind, have a great group of friends, are a talented artist, and a multi-sport athlete.

Over 5 years ago, when they were 11, they came out as non-binary and started using they/them pronouns. At the time, these were concepts and grammar that I was neither familiar with, nor comfortable with.

But listen, I love my kids— and their gender identity doesn't change that one bit. So over the past 5 years I read and listened, struggled and questioned, and tried to figure out how to be the best parent I can for my kids.

About six months ago, they became severely depressed, and they have twice attempted suicide. In the week leading up to their first suicide attempt, they told me that they saw no place for themselves in this world. Let me tell you- That's a heartbreaking thing to hear from your child.

Part of their hopelessness comes from the anti-trans legislation sweeping across the country bringing with it the message: "They are not welcome." "They are not wanted." Indeed, "There is no place for them."

So senators, I want to ask two things of you today. I am not going to ask for your understanding about my child, their gender identity, their struggles and hopes. I am not going to ask for your respect for my journey or decisions as a parent.

I simply ask that you believe me when I tell you that SB480, and bills like it across the country, harm my child, regardless of intent. Medical decisions for my child should be between my family and our doctors and therapists.

The second thing I ask of you, is that you each find 5 transgender people or parents of a trans kid in your district and talk to them. Sit down, face-to-face and hear their story. Listen to them. Only after that should you make your decision about how to vote on SB480.



WISCONSIN COUNCIL
OF CHURCHES
COURAGE. JUSTICE. HOLY IMAGINATION.

To: Members of the Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities
From: Rev. Breanna Illéné, Director of Ecumenical Innovation and Justice Initiatives,
Wisconsin Council of Churches
Date: October 4, 2023
Re: Testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 480

The Wisconsin Council of Churches (WCC) is a network of Christian churches and faith-based organizations committed to working together across our many differences to promote collective good. We connect 21 Christian traditions, which have within them approximately 2,000 congregations and over one million church members. Exercising holy imagination, we help one another make courageous choices that lead toward peacemaking, social and economic justice for Wisconsin's most vulnerable residents, the vitality of the church, and the well-being of our neighbors.

As a Council, we have adopted a statement on Nonviolence that reminds us that "Faithfulness to its mission requires the Church to speak out against violence, minister to its victims, and work tirelessly to reduce the level of violence in society." We come here today to decry the violence in SB 480.

Transgender individuals are unnecessarily under attack, and this legislation is just one of many items currently before our state legislature that cause undue harm to a marginalized community. The isolation and demonizing that this bill promotes are spiritually harmful, empowering hate speech and hateful action. Transgender individuals are children of God who deserve a dignified existence.

Loving our neighbor is a basic ethical presupposition common to many faiths including our Christian scripture. It calls for unreserved respect for and identification with our neighbor, as a fellow human being created in the image of God. No one is excluded.

Access to health care that provides for the whole of the person is a matter of simple justice. This access should be free from stigma and discrimination. Denying transgender adolescents access to affirming medical care is an act of violence. Doctors need to be free to provide this life-saving care.

Our faith teaches that God is relentless in pursuit of well-being for the world and its inhabitants. We seek the common good. As Christians, we are called to facilitate communities of well-being, and public policy that does not harm. In this spirit of love and accountability, we reject SB 480 on its merits, and we ask this body to do the same.

Thank you for your time.

TO: Members of the Senate Committee on Health

FROM: Rev. Tim Schaefer
Pastor, First Baptist Church of Madison

RE: Senate Bill 480

Chair Cabral-Guevara and members of the committee:

I have served as a pastor for seven years, four of those years as a minister to youth and their families. In that time, I have had the privilege of acting as confidant and spiritual guide to many LGBTQ+ people, particularly transgender youth and their families. When most people come to their pastor seeking counsel, it is usually because they are experiencing a crisis of faith. When that happens, my job as a pastor is to walk beside them as they navigate that crisis. Because of this work, it has been my honor to hear the stories and experiences of transgender and nonbinary youth and their parents as they seek to do what's best for their child. Over the course of my career, it has given me a better understanding of what it means to wrestle with your gender identity, and it has increased my capacity for empathy and compassion around a topic I did not initially fully understand.

I recognize that it is only human to fear that which we do not know or understand. So I am urging you today to put aside your feelings and preconceived notions about gender-affirming medical care and listen—*really listen*—to the testimony being given by those in the room who understand this issue the best. Listen to the medical and mental health experts as they tell you the benefits to trans youth when they are allowed to pursue these medical interventions. Listen to the parents of transgender and nonbinary children when they tell you what support they need from you to protect their parental rights to make decisions about their children's safety and wellbeing. And most of all, listen to the members of the trans community as they share their own stories and experiences. Acknowledge the strength and courage it takes to be so vulnerable and share such personal and traumatic stories in a public setting like this.

Ultimately, I hope that the testimony today will move you to protect the most vulnerable of the vulnerable in our society—transgender and nonbinary youth. I urge you to stand up for their rights and vote no on SB480.

Rev. Tim Schaefer
Pastor, First Baptist Church of Madison

Cosmetic Surgery Age Distribution

COSMETIC SURGICAL PROCEDURES	AGE 13-19	AGE 13-19	AGE 13-19
	2020 TOTAL	% OF TOTAL PROCEDURES	% CHANGE 2020 vs 2019
Breast augmentation (Augmentation mammoplasty)****	3,233	2%	-34%
Breast implant removals (Augmentation patients only)****	64	0%	2%
Breast lift (Mastopexy)****	1,006	1%	-23%
Breast reduction (Aesthetic patients only)****	1,843	5%	-26%
Breast reduction in men (Gynecomastia)****	2,823	15%	-11%
Buttock lift****	12	0%	-29%
Cheek implant (malar augmentation)º	3,033	3%	-11%
Chin augmentation (Mentoplasty)º	2,517	6%	-5%
Dermabrasionº	2,152	2%	-14%
Ear surgery (Otoplasty)º	17,340	33%	-3%
Eyelid surgery (Blepharoplasty)º	5,301	2%	-9%
Forehead liftº	74	0%	-4%
Labiaplasty****	879	9%	-16%
Lip augmentation (other than injectable materials)º	331	1%	-23%
Liposuction	2,346	1%	-22%
Lower body lift****	43	1%	0%
Neck liftº	46	0%	-15%
Nose reshaping (Rhinoplasty)º	44,686	13%	-4%
Thigh lift****	46	0%	-10%
Tummy tuck (Abdominoplasty)****	166	0%	-17%
Upper arm lift****	25	0%	0%
TOTAL COSMETIC SURGICAL PROCEDURES	87,966	4%	-8%

COSMETIC MINIMALLY-INVASIVE PROCEDURES	AGE 13-19	AGE 13-19	AGE 13-19
	2020 TOTAL	% OF TOTAL PROCEDURES	% CHANGE 2020 vs 2019
Botulinum Toxin Type A (Botox™, Dysport™, Xeomin™)***	12,767	0%	-12%
Chemical peel	4,035	0%	-35%
Laser hair removal	47,850	6%	-29%
Laser skin resurfacingº	47,979	5%	-8%
Laser treatment of leg veins	15,223	9%	-21%
Microdermabrasion	5,140	1%	-24%
Sclerotherapy	442	0%	-9%
Soft Tissue Fillers	8,338	0%	-12%
Calcium hydroxylapatite (Radiesse™)º	692	0%	-17%
Fat-faceº	1,149	1%	-10%
Hyaluronic acid (Juvederm Ultra™, Juvederm Ultra Plus™, Perlane™, Restylane™, Belotero™)º	4,711	0%	-8%
Polylic acid (Sculptra™)º	1,786	1%	-20%
TOTAL COSMETIC MINIMALLY-INVASIVE PROCEDURES	141,774	1%	-20%
TOTAL COSMETIC PROCEDURES	229,740	2%	-15%

Age 13-19

All figures are projected.
 †Total represents only 18 and 19 year olds.
 *Data unavailable in prior year.
 **Botulinum Toxin Type A numbers for 2020 and 2019 have been restated without adjustment for aseptic shrapnel.
 ***Counts of procedures performed by ASRS member surgeons only.
 Average length of time Board-Certified physicians reported they stopped performing surgical procedures in 2020 due to Covid-19 is 8.1 weeks.
 †Projections have been updated to reflect a more comprehensive set of Board-Certified physicians performing these procedures.
 ASRS Procedural Statistics represent procedures performed by ASRS member surgeons certified by The American Board of Plastic Surgery® as well as other physicians certified by American Board of Medical Specialist-recognized boards. © ASRS, 2021



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health Services

Tony Evers, Governor
Kirsten L. Johnson, Secretary

TO: Members of the Senate Committee on Health

FROM: HJ Waukau, Legislative Director

DATE: October 12, 2023

RE: SB 407 relating to: healthy aging grants and making an appropriation.

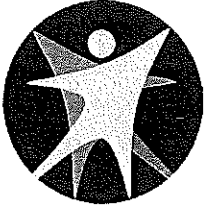
The Department of Health Services (DHS) would like to submit written testimony for information only on Senate Bill 407 (SB 407), regarding healthy aging grants and making an appropriation. The bill directs DHS to allocate a grant of \$378,000 in each fiscal year of the 2023-25 fiscal biennium to a private, nonprofit entity that conducts certain activities related to healthy aging, including coordinating the implementation of evidence-based health promotion programs to support healthy aging; serving as a statewide clearinghouse on evidence-based falls injury, disease prevention, self-management, and health promotion programs; providing training and technical assistance to the staff of county departments, administering agencies and other providers of services to aging populations; and collecting and disseminating information on falls injury, disease prevention, and health promotion in healthy aging populations.

There are currently just over one million adults over age 65 in Wisconsin. By 2040, that number is expected to grow by almost 50%. Investing in interventions that promote the health of older adults and support their ability to remain in their homes and communities is central to help limit cost growth in long-term care programs and to promote quality of life for individuals as they age. SB 407 also calls out a number of falls-related initiatives that could be funded under the bill. This is timely as DHS recently issued a report highlighting Wisconsin as having the highest fall death rate among older adults in the United States.¹

There are several evidence-based healthy aging, or health promotion, programs available in Wisconsin that have been demonstrated to reduce costs, improve health, and prevent or delay age-related disease and disability. While the benefits of these programs are clear, the infrastructure for administering them is not sufficient to support the need or potential of a strong statewide prevention strategy for older adults and people with disabilities. SB 407 would provide an important capacity-building foundation for these programs and activities statewide. SB 407 would also support the goals of improved health promotion and disease prevention at the local level and statewide, helping older adults live their best lives.

DHS would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to submit written testimony for information only and offers itself as a resource for the Committee.

¹ Wisconsin Department of Health Services, "EMS and Falls in Wisconsin, 2022 Report," September 2023, <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p03493.pdf>.



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health Services

Tony Evers, Governor
Kirsten L. Johnson, Secretary

TO: Members of the Senate Committee on Health

FROM: HJ Waukau, Legislative Director

DATE: October 12, 2023

RE: SB 476 relating to: provision of health services through telehealth by out-of-state providers under the Medical Assistance program.

The Department of Health Services (DHS) would like to submit written testimony for information only on Senate Bill 476 (SB 476), regarding the provision of health services through telehealth by out-of-state providers under the Medical Assistance (MA) program. Under current administrative code, out-of-state health care providers that regularly provide services to Wisconsin MA recipients and that provide services to Wisconsin MA recipients through telehealth may apply for certification as a MA provider in Wisconsin regardless of the provider's location. During the COVID-19 pandemic the combination of technological advancements and the Public Health Emergency resulted in an increased utilization and expansion of coverage for telehealth modalities of service. This utilization expanded the availability of providers to connect with patients resulting in decreased scheduling delays, decreased appointment no-shows, and increased member access in provider shortage areas.

SB 476 would codify the administrative code provision, DHS 105.48(2m), by prohibiting DHS from requiring a health care provider that is licensed, certified, registered, or otherwise authorized to provide health care services in this state; and that exclusively offers health care services in this state through telehealth to maintain a physical address or site in this state to be eligible for enrollment as a certified provider under the MA program. Wisconsin Medicaid currently has existing provider enrollment processes in place to allow for providers with practice addresses outside of the state to enroll. These procedures allow for providers to enroll in one of three categories: in-state, border-status, or out-of-state. These general enrollment categories are not restricted depending on the provider's intent to provide in-person or telehealth services.

As the Department already has existing allowances in place to afford for out-of-state providers to enroll without requiring the provider to maintain a physical address in Wisconsin, this bill would align with existing authorities and serve as supporting regulation to the requirements in Wis. Stat. 49.45(61)(e)2, which prohibits DHS from requiring any additional certification or requirements for services provided solely through telehealth. It further maintains a parity established by 2019 Act 56 that providers, regardless of the service delivery method being in person or telehealth, may be certified when they are located outside of Wisconsin. Additionally, it will likely result in additional provider enrollments for out-of-state providers which could increase workloads on DHS staff to conduct reviews of new providers.

Since existing authorities do not prohibit telehealth-only providers from enrolling, this bill would align with the provisions already in place that do not limit geographic location for enrollment, unless otherwise limited by other existing authority requirements. For example, school medical services are limited to providers that are physically located in Wisconsin under Wis. Stat. 49.45(39). Any existing restrictions which would prohibit an out-of-state provider from enrolling are not expressly tied to the provision of services via telehealth.

DHS would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to submit written testimony for information only and offers itself as a resource for the Committee.

To the Members of the Senate Health Committee

My name is Tessa Price I'm a trans woman who organizes other trans folks regionally under Trans Advocacy Madison. We hear countless stories from queer youth across Wisconsin and America who desperately need access to healthcare and social support. Gender-Affirming Care saved my life. Not just proper hormones, but broadly - socially, legally. Finding a doctor who was proficient in gender-affirming care was difficult, but their expertise in modern medicine has helped me live my life on my own terms. I spent my early years suspicious of medicine and doctors, and I was wrong. As an adult, my doctors and I gave informed consent to hormone replacement therapy. I often think about how much happier my life as a child would have been if I had access to be myself, to be recognized as a transgender girl.

When I was a teenager, about half my life ago, I tried to end my own life because I had no access to support or health care. I thought there was no place in life I could belong. I was wrong. Since then, I have grown as a person and as a woman and understood myself as transgender. Access to social support and medical care around Madison saved my life. I don't want any other trans kids to make the mistake I did as a kid. Please don't make their lives worse.

The government has no part in my health care. The government has no part in overruling doctors or singling out transgender people for discrimination. Gender-affirming care is not experimental, it's been going on for a century or more. There is nothing scary about gender-affirming care, it is just ripe for bigots and demagogues to spread lies about us and spin it as though they are helping us. Trust trans people, trust our doctors, because we sure as hell don't trust you politicians. Can you blame us?

Trans people have enough issues finding health care already, and this bill would just make that even more difficult. It has become clear that some legislators are willing to throw out modern life-saving gender-affirming health care to score political points. The LGBT+ community will track your votes, and share them widely among our neighbors around Wisconsin. This is another attack on innocent trans youth who deserve nothing more than to live in safety and have access to modern health care.

Gender-affirming care saves lives. I am happier than I have ever been. It saved my life, and it saved countless others. This ban and others like it are part of a global effort to genocide trans people, starting at innocent children. This bill is a cynical ploy to win votes - and it won't work. Voting for this will make you guilty of genociding innocent children for the rest of history. Thank you.

Hello,

My name is Delany Zimmer and I am a City of Madison resident and LGBTQ+ ally.

I would like to state my formal opposition to Senate Bill 480, the ban on trans medical care for youth.

This bill is not based on science or fact, but fear and prejudice. Extensive studies have found that gender-affirming care benefits not only an individual's physical health but also benefits their mental health. When youth have access to gender-affirming care, they are 60% less likely to suffer from moderate or severe depression and 73% less likely to have thoughts of self-harm or suicide. A ban on gender-affirming care would be a mental health CRISIS.

Gender-affirming care is basic healthcare; everyone deserves to meet their basic human needs. This ban would only further vilify and discriminate against an already vulnerable community.

Trans people are people. They just want to live in a world where they can be who they want and access basic medical care needs.

Politicians have no place in decisions regarding private medical conversations. These decisions must be made between a patient and a doctor.

I beg you, please voice your strong opposition to this bill.

Sincerely,
Delany Zimmer (she/her/hers)
Madison, WI 53703

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Katie Hayden, and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 33 years and I am a public school teacher and parent.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because gender-affirming care saves lives, and it is undertaken only with thoughtful consideration by patients, their families and their medical providers.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,
Katie Hayden
Madison, WI 53716

TO: Senate Committee on Health

FROM: Rev. Douglas Clement, United Methodist Pastor

DATE: October 10, 2023

RE: Senate Bill 480 – prohibiting gender transition medical intervention for individuals under 18 years of age

My name is Rev. Douglas Clement, my pronouns are he/him/his, and I am an ordained United Methodist pastor serving in the state of Wisconsin. I am writing in opposition to the proposed SB 480.

Growing up, I was taught that being a Christian and being an American meant embracing the wide diversity of thought, practice, and personhood that exists in our communities. I remember learning how Jesus told us we were to “love one another” (John 13:34) and how, as people living in the United States, we had the right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”. While there have certainly been times when we haven’t always lived up to these ideals, the act of striving for them (and of believing they should be for all people) were (as I understood it) fundamental to who we are.

As a United Methodist, I am part of a tradition and a movement that has fought throughout our history to make this a reality. Our own Social Principles call us to “work toward societies in which each person’s value is recognized, maintained, and strengthened” and to “deplore acts of hate or violence against groups or persons based on race, color, national origin, ethnicity, age, gender, disability, status, economic condition, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religious affiliation.” (§162, *The United Methodist Book of Discipline, 2016*). Which is why I feel compelled to speak out against these bills.

SB 480 singles out transgender individuals (specifically under the age 18), giving credence to the falsehood that they are somehow deficient and incapable of articulating who they are, when no such assumption is made of their cisgender peers. Furthermore, it gives space for hateful rhetoric, for bullying behavior, and for discriminatory practice. In fact, it *requires it* (by barring them from scientifically proven, necessary medical care, even with the consent of their caregivers and of medical professionals).

There are multiple instances, both in scripture and in the history of our nation, where we have witnessed the consequences of our failure to include and care for those on the margins. As the Apostle Paul observed in his letter to the churches in Corinth, we are all members of one body (i.e. community). “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.” (1 Corinthians 12:26). Indeed, it is the responsibility of each of us (as individuals) and of our government to “[p]rovide the care needed to maintain health” physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and relationally. (§162.V, *The United Methodist Book of Discipline, 2016*). And yet, the proposed SB 480 instead *withholds* such care from young transgender folks, and puts them at greater risk for lasting harm.

The truth is, our brothers, sisters, siblings who are transgender are made in the image of God, same as you or me. They deserve the same love, acceptance, and affirmation. They deserve the same chance to be able to share their skills, talents, and passions. And they deserve the same access to medical care *according to their gender identity*.

I ask you to give them the same opportunities that have been afforded to generations of young folks. Vote “no” on SB 480.

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Rachel Kiley, and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 35 years and have 2 elementary age children. I am a family nurse practitioner

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because **I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.** Limiting the medical care that can be provided to LGBTQ+ youth does NOT protect them and will cause harm.

At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

Rachel Kiley
Madison, 53716

Dear members of the Senate hearing committee on health,

My name is Susan Kilmer and I am a resident of Madison, Wisconsin. I've lived here for 30 years as a member of the LGBTQ community and raised my family here.

I'm writing you to urge you to vote NO on Senate bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsin resident, I oppose these bills because the government has no business making medical decisions for anyone.

If passed these bills will cost lives and cause harm to LGBTQ+ youth who are already struggling from harassment and discrimination.

Let's make Wisconsin safe and welcoming for all members of our community.

Would you want the government interfering in your right to access medical care and decisions made between you and your doctor?

Please vote NO!

Thank you,
Susan Kilmer
Madison, WI 53704

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Jessie Chmell, and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 20 years, am a parent of two children and a hospice social worker.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bill # SB 479 and SB 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to this bill because it is based on hate and exclusion. Trans and non-binary individuals are not a threat to us. As the parent of a child who identifies as non-binary and experiences gender dysphoria, I have experienced the importance of having gender affirming care. My child has experienced depression around their gender dysphoria and would not be here today without having received various levels of gender affirming care and support.

The individuals making recommendations regarding medical care should be those trained in providing it- the medical community, not politicians or anyone else. We don't want our politicians making decisions about our cancer or dementia care so why would we allow them to make decisions about any other healthcare? Gender affirming, medical based health care is supported across the mainstream medical community by national medical bodies such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the Endocrine Society, the American Urological Association, the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, the American College of Physicians, the American Association of Clinical Endocrinology, and the American Psychological Association.

If passed, this bill will cost lives. Look around! All of our youth are already struggling with record high rates of anxiety and depression. Our LGBTQ+ youth (and young adults) have those same mental health struggles plus the compounded struggles of harassment and discrimination. We should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin. We should be sending our LGBTQ+ youth the message that they are loved and supported, exactly as they are.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families. Please say NO to Senate Bill # SB 479 and SB 480.

Sincerely,
Jessie Chmell

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Krista Eastman and I am a resident of Madison, Wisconsin. I was born in Sauk County and have lived in Wisconsin for 40-some years. I am also raising my young son here.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because they are extremely harmful to the mental health of our young people, discriminatory, and hateful.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Krista Eastman
Madison, WI 53715

To the Senate Committee on Health:

My name is Carissa DeLain Lohrenz. I live in the city of Madison and am a life-long Wisconsin resident. I vehemently oppose both SB 479 and SB 480. Access to healthcare is critical and should be considered a right. Healthcare decisions should be between a healthcare provider and their patient. It is a massive overstep for the government to intervene to prevent gender-affirming care for minors or to allow doctors to be sued for performing care requested by their patients. Gender-affirming care is important for many reasons, but especially for mental health. A 2022 study from the Journal of Interpersonal Health found that 82% of transgender individuals have contemplated suicide and 40% have attempted suicide, which percentages even higher for trans youth. Creating further barriers for these individuals could quite literally result in lives lost. Gender-affirming care IS HEALTHCARE and it would be wrong to block patients from making these decisions with their doctors.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I hope the Committee will choose to do what is right for transgender Wisconsinites.

-Carissa DeLain Lohrenz

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Melinda Suelflow, and I am a resident of Washburn, WI. I've lived in Wisconsin for 7 years and am a teacher in Bayfield County.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I personally know many transgender youth, both in my community and elsewhere. Gender affirming care has allowed these youth to build happier, healthier lives for themselves as transgender people.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Melinda Suelflow
Washburn, WI 54891

Dear WI Senate,

You were elected to represent the people of your communities. Nothing in your background, experience or expertise indicates you have the right or ability to dictate health care decisions for your community. I oppose SB 479 and SB 480 and I oppose your determination to interfere with medical providers' care of their patients. Leave medical decisions up to medical professionals and the individual receiving the care and their guardians, where appropriate.

I was assigned female at birth and identify as female today. This is not personal, this is factual and it is the right thing to do to care for everyone in WI. The existence of trans and non-binary people only impacts my life negatively when they are treated inhumanely and forced to endure violence and discrimination. When they are not cared for I see that my elected officials are unable to actually care for any of us.

Do better.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Turpin (she/her)
Plover, WI 54467

Hello Wisconsin state committee

I am Connie Peters I, I live out in Sharon Wisconsin. I have lived in Wisconsin all my life. I transitioned back in 2018 because I was unable to get trans affirming care when I was a minor. Because of this I tried committing suicide when I came out in 2016. If I had been accepted and gotten the care I needed I would have had a happier childhood. Please do not allow what happened to me happen to others kids. They do not deserve to lose their lives or attempt to take their own. Please vote no, on SB 479 and SB 480,

Thank you

Connie Peters
Sharon, WI

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Ron Zeilinger, and I am a resident of Durand. I've lived in Wisconsin almost all my life, having been born and raised in Pepin County on a family dairy farm.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because I believe government should not interfere with a personal, private medical matter that should involve only the physicians, patients and their families.

Our society does not need this additional cause of stress and tension, at a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination. I want them to feel safe and welcome in our state of Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

Ron Zeilinger
Durand, Wisconsin 54736

United Church of Christ
Open and Affirming
Immigrant Welcoming

54 South Jackson Street
Janesville, Wisconsin 53548-3837
(608) 752-8716
Website:
Facebook: Janesville UCC
Email: Janesvilleucc@janesvilleucc.org

October 11, 2023

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony.

My name is Rev. Dr. Tanya Sadagopan and I am from Janesville, WI. I am an ordained Minister in the United Church of Christ in the Wisconsin Conference. I am also the future mother-in-law of a gender nonbinary person who is engaged to my son.

Today I am speaking on behalf of my church Janesville UCC, First Congregational Church in who has sent me here to speak against the passage of this bill SB 480. I also served on the national UCC committee at our General Synod 34 in July that brought forth the resolution calling on clergy and lay leaders to Actively Affirm Transgender persons.

The first thing I would like to say is this: Stop harming children with legislation like this.

This bill is creating refugees. Let me explain. A colleague of mine who is a most caring and loving dad saw this day coming in Wisconsin. Because his child was experiencing gender dysphoria, he worked to move his family to Canada. He did not feel safe raising his young family in our state. Across the border he could assure his child could receive puberty blockers without fear of the legislature taking away his right to care for his family.

We have a school Principal in our church who sees the challenges trans youth face on a daily basis. They have this to say to the committee:

“For a youth population already struggling with mental health, the proposed legislation only intensifies the problems the young people face.”

From a faithful attender at our church who is undergoing gender affirming surgery this week, they asked that I share this testimony with the committee:

“I was 25 when I was 100% sure that I was, in fact Trans. It's not a choice that is made quickly or taken lightly. Years of counseling and guided information from people with similar experiences helped me. If I had been allowed access to this information at a younger age, I would have had a head start and been able to choose [to have gender affirming surgery] at 18.”

What does the national United Church of Christ say about this matter?¹ The following excerpted

¹ Resolution Committee 13: Actively Affirming the Human Dignity of Transgender and Nonbinary Persons, General Synod of the United Church of Christ, June 30-July 4, 2023, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Dear Senate Committee on Health,

I am writing to vigorously oppose SB 479 and SB 480. There is nothing about these bills that is based in science, medicine or the welfare of children.

The very medical associations to whom you should be deferring ALL support gender-affirming care! You have no business interfering in a relationship between patients and their medical care providers. None.

These bills are being considered for only one reason: stoking bigotry against LGBTQ people to further a toxic political agenda that intentionally harms children.

Most sincerely,

David Gordon
McFarland, WI 53558

Testimony Regarding Senate Bills 479 & 480

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Sam Eifert, and I am a resident of Stoughton. I've lived in Wisconsin for almost 34 years (my entire life) and have spent almost all of it in Stoughton. I am a Realtor, a business owner, board member of a local non-profit as well as a professional realtor council. I love our beautiful state, the community I have in Stoughton, and the great sense of community found throughout Wisconsin.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills and I am exhausted fighting this battle; especially when I know that there are people who oppose this care not out of genuine concern for the children, but rather for their own fame, recognition, and political power.

There are far more important issues facing our country, and our great state of Wisconsin, than this one.

Transgender children are at a high risk of bullying, suffering, and self-harm. To completely ban gender-affirming care would be asinine and dangerous. You have less knowledge and understanding of this situation than the child's doctor and other healthcare professionals that have professional degrees in science and medicine. There is no way for you to know more about this than those who are actually going through it.

At the end of the day, this should be a medical and psychological decision made by the minor and the family, in conjunction with their trusted medical professionals, and not a decision by the Wisconsin state government. These decisions affect each individual, individually, and a sweeping ban on all care should not be coming from a state body. At this time, any minor or family can choose to not receive gender-affirming care if they wish; they have the freedom to do so. **I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.**

To weaponize this issue and position it as if parents are convincing their children to transition early and against their will is repugnant and dishonest. We do not need our freedoms taken away by a legislature. This is political fodder that will actually and acutely affect children in a negative way.

Please, take a breath, take a moment, and actually think about the kids. Do not pass this bill.

Thank you.

Sam Eifert
Stoughton, WI 53589

Good morning, Members of the Senate Committee on Health, Senator Cabral-Guevera, Senator Testin, Senator Felzkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, and Senator Carpenter,

I, Cassandra Quick, am a registered voter/neighbor/community member in the City of Madison. I have lived here for in Madison and Middleton for 6 years and am a Parent to an LGBTQ individual and business owner, particularly a mental health therapist.

I care about this bill/measure because this bill puts the safety of my daughter at risk by limiting her medical and mental health provider to provide gender affirming care and eliminates my ability to provide gender affirming care to my clients, who already struggle with their mental health due to trauma.

As a member of this community, **I urge you to vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480** as they are likely to

... cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

... negatively impact the well-being of my community members. It is already difficult enough to access medical care. Please do not add unnecessary challenges to families of transgender individuals.

... cause medical providers in areas where there are already too few, to leave the state for areas where they are allowed to practice in alignment with their medical training and professional ethics.

I know you share in my care for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you **OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480 today**. You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,
Cassandra Quick
Zip code: 53704

Thomas Porter
Elkhorn, WI 53121

Senators,

I would like to express my opposition to Senate Bills 479 and 480. I believe that government should not be in the business of outlawing medical procedures. Certainly, government has a place in deciding what it will pay for, but not to outlaw specific medical treatments.

I also fail to see how this legislation will protect "children" as the vast majority will not need or seek out such treatment.

Please, let patients, their families and their doctors make decisions about what is the best care.

To the Committee:

Legislation of this type still shocks me, although as a woman it should not.

I'm curious about how doctors feel about you legislating their work. What if they could turn the tables? You go in for a physical exam and your doctor says, "I choose not to treat you based on the way you vote, the way you avoid paying your fair share of taxes, and the way you spread misinformation. There's the door - and by the way, I'm going to sue you just for thinking you had the right to access care here! Have a nice day."

- **Senate Bill 479**: Allows a patient or their family to sue a doctor for providing gender affirming health care, and requires that a notice is posted in the offices of medical providers with the intention of scaring patients.

- **Senate Bill 480**: Prohibits anyone under the age of 18 from accessing gender affirming care in Wisconsin

We know, love and have witnessed a trans child's journey over years - have you ever done that? To see this young adult thriving today, having attended schools over the years, and now workplaces, that welcomed and sought out his abilities and contributions - is unsurprising and dare I say it - affirming.

Would people prefer that these bills get passed and there be more corresponding youth suicides and medical lawsuits as a result? I hope not. An optimist, I think that most people are good and that bills like this are simply political posturing. But actions like this impact real people's lives in very negative and dangerous ways and create fallout for our citizenship that is costly and at times, irreparable.

When I see and hear the vitriol and hatred directed at trans people or related issues, I shudder. Everyone should have the experience of being on the receiving end of it - or trying to shield their child or loved one from it - just for one day. I guarantee they would gain a bit of insight, a smidge of empathy, or even some knowledge.

A positive consequence of outrageous and over-reaching bills like this is that they breed countless allies. Do send them to the recycle bin anyway, so that when YOUR loved ones look back on this time, they can feel proud of your actions.

Sincerely,

Susan Fuszard

Regarding SB 480 and SB 479 -

These bills are a travesty. Lawsuits against doctors that provide private and essential care are absurd and raining cruelty and judgement upon innocent minors is indefensible.

I urge reconsideration of these dangerous ploys.

Cheryl Juech
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

Regarding SB 480 -

Hello, My name is Ashley Lemerand and I am a taxpayer in Green Lake Co WI. We are currently fighting for our students at our school to expand our policy concerning Trans Students. We are able to use the footing that our state supports us, supports Trans students. Please do not take this away. Please do not do this. We beg you not to make our voices heard.

Thank you,
Ashley Lemerand
Owner of Raven & Rose Apothecary
Leader of SAFTEY Group in Berlin WI

Hello Senate Committee on Health my name is Josie Gonwa. I have lived in Wisconsin my whole life. I was born in Milwaukee and moved to West Allis when I was 4; where I still live to this day. I write to the committee today to plead that all of you vote against sb 479 and sb 480 because of the truly irreparable harm these bills will have against trans youth if passed. I won't write about suicide statistics or any other statistics, plenty of other people will mention that I am sure. I am asking you all to recognize that these bills are targeted against the most vulnerable of our society. These bills will ban vital health care for children and will put a target on the backs of doctors and nurse practitioners; men and women who have devoted their adult lives to help and heal all those who come before them.

I am a transgender woman and I can tell you that if I were a teen today I would be terrified out of my mind at losing my vital health care. Since I have begun my transition I have never been happier and more at peace with myself. I finally feel alive and I have hope for my future. Before I transitioned I was so depressed and full of self loathing. I never saw a future for myself, at least not one where I was happy and enjoying life. I have hurt myself repeatedly in the past, I have tried to end my life, I have resorted to drugs and alcohol to try and numb my pain; and all of this before my 18th birthday. If I had figured out I was trans when I was a child and got the vital treatment that this bills threaten it would be a very difficult story. I would have been so much happier, I would have been able to make friends instead of hiding with in myself. I would not have resorted to harming myself, to try and kill myself, to swiping pills for my grandmother and stealing from the liquor cabinet. I know for a fact if you take away this health care from these children that what I went through will be repeated time and time again. There will be endless suffering and heartbreak. Kids will die. That's not a promise but just a fact of reality no different than the sky being blue or the sun setting every night just to rise the next day. If you were to ask my mom or any supportive parent that they will all say, "I would rather have a transgender child than a dead cisgender child." I beg of all of you forget what party you belong to and just for 5 minutes think what if this was your child or your niece/nephew and how you would have to tell that the health care that is giving them the life they always knew was their's is being taken away and that they need to shove it back in box. Imagine the devastation on their faces, their heart break.

Please let the medical professionals do what they know is best, what every major medical association in this country knows, that gender affirming care doesn't just save lives it gives people life. Please know that if these bills pass, their sponsors will just keep pushing to take more and more away. That next they will target adults like me. If that happens I don't know if I could survive that. Thank you for your time and I hope you all have the moral courage to do the right thing and vote, No on sb 479 and sb 480

Sincerely, Josie J Gonwa

Hello,

I am writing in to oppose SB479 and SB480. I am a parent of a now 20 year old trans son. When my child was 14 they came out as nonbinary and shortly thereafter transgender. This threw us into a whole new world and at first I did not handle it well. I denied, I was angry, I tried to stop my kiddo from hanging around with these 'influences'. We found a therapist who said ignore it. That we could sometimes use their chosen pronouns but most of the time shouldn't. They would grow out of it. My child became isolated and angry, withdrawn. He started giving all of his stuff away. His bedroom that used to be filled with books, music, stuffed animals, tons of clothes and Harry Potter things, looked like a cell. There was a mattress on the floor and a half dozen articles of clothing in the closet. He started taking 3-4 hour baths. I learned that was where he was cutting and burning himself. We nearly lost our child. The child that when born to me I promised to love and protect from all the worlds hurts, we nearly lost because of our own fears, our own biases, our own negligence and our own uneducated views. My stomach and heart are heavy just thinking about it.

When he was about 16, we said enough! We talked to each other, we talked to our son, community support, other parents, and we learned. We went to the PATH clinic, we found a lgbtq friendly therapist. It took 3 different therapists for our son to find the right fit. We watched our son come out of his shell, he found friends, his grades improved, his closet filled up and his room filled up. He smiled. It broke my heart because I realized I hadn't seen a smile in 2 years.

We were never offered any type of surgery before the age of 18. In fact, the PATH clinic made it clear that surgery prior to 18 was nearly unheard of. They discussed how there was no right way or timeline to transition. They discussed resources. They weighed out the pros and cons of every single option and then they sent us home to discuss as a family and to discuss with our therapist if we wished. We cautiously chose to do hormone therapy before 18 and it literally saved his life. It saved his life. If we had not had this option. If we had not chosen this option I can say with 100% certainty that I would be a mother without a child right now.

If you vote for these bills, you are without a doubt killing children.

My son is now a happy, healthy, confident 20 year old. He works a job he loves. He has hobbies. He has pets. He smiles and he laughs and he is a good person. A person who will go out of his way to help someone in need of it. I am so very proud of him. You would be too.

Thank you,
Colleen Waydick
608-843-1746

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Bonnie Stubbendick, and I am a resident of La Crosse. I've lived in Wisconsin for my entire life, 66 years. I am the grandmother of six children that I love dearly and equally. One of my grandchildren is trans. This grandchild deserves to have the right to the medical intervention that they need.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because I believe it is imperative that gender transitioning medical care is available to youth. I adamantly believe that trans young people should have the freedom to access the life saving healthcare that they need in order to achieve their optimal physical and emotional well-being. I feel very strongly about the need for you to vote NO because of my personal and professional convictions. (I have worked with LGBTQ+ youth throughout my career as a psychotherapist).

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I do not believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,
Bonnie Stubbendick

La Crosse, WI 54601

Dear Senators,

While I was present and gave some testimony last week at the Assembly hearing on AB465, I won't be able to attend Thursday's 11am hearing on SB 479 and SB 480 due to speaking at the WI Courts Coordinator and Case Manager Conference in Middleton.

I would offer this as testimony against these two bills for the following reasons:

1. Neither bill nor the ones in the Assembly have done a study of the impact to society if the bills pass. Environmental impact studies are completed if a development is proposed to see if there are any negative consequences to the changes proposed. Are ducks, frogs and field mice more important than children? I request a social impact study be done to explore and show negative impacts of passage of these types of bills.
2. Neither bill allows the any member of the medical community to refer to other resources in other States which may be more advanced in medical, biology and science (MN) than WI. None of the bills will allow our medical providers to obtain any additional training on the issue of transgender persons or care for transgender individuals.
3. None of these bills blocks children from using internet sources that allow them to obtain unregulated, non-monitored drugs and opinions, which lead to unsupervised self-medication, self-counseling and often times unintended overdoses and/or death or suicide. Let the trained medical community and social services monitor and advise and medicate if necessary, our children.

As a parent of a trans child, who has successfully overcome the existing obstacles to their transition, I ask that you suspend the move to pass these and other bills until more research has been completed on your part and neutral sources be used as a base for your decisions. These bills propose to 'our save children's lives' may have the unintended consequence of taking more lives than they save.

Respectfully requested to be entered into the record in opposition of SB 479 and SB 480,

James W. Parlow
La Crosse WI 54601

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Phil, and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 12 years and have raised two kids here.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because decisions about health care treatment options should be made by medical professionals and patients. The proper role of government in health care is to make it more accessible to everyone that needs it, not to overrule standards of care that have been developed through years of careful research by doctors, researchers, and medical professionals. There is no role for politicians in making health care decisions for people. I am begging you to have some humility and let people make the decisions that they see as best for themselves and their loved ones, in consultation with the medical professionals that they trust to support them with the best care that they can provide.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. As I'm sure you have been repeatedly told, gender-affirming care is lifesaving care. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Philip Hassett
Madison, WI 53711

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Angela Shetler, and I am a resident of Oregon. I've lived in Wisconsin for 9 years, and I am a parent, a voter, and a healthcare industry worker.

I am writing to urge you to vote **NO** on Senate Bills 479 and 480. If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin. These bills also infringe on privacy and bodily rights.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Angela Shetler
Oregon, 53575

To the Committee on Health:

I write as a pastor concerned about the wellbeing of young people, people whom my faith tradition believes were created in the image of God and for whom I consider it my calling to proclaim they are loved by God. My name is Nick Utphall, born in Spooner, I grew up in Eau Claire, and have served congregations in the Madison area for nearly twenty years.

In my role—and even within my family—I've witnessed the harm and trauma caused by gender dysphoria. I've observed and celebrated the amazing turnaround when young people get to be exactly who they are. It's something I can't fully feel or understand within my body as a cisgender male (labeled as male at birth and still feeling that identity), but I cannot deny it in these young people. It's an amazing new reality just when they have the opportunity to say who they actually are—and I believe whom God created them to be.

That's already a start. A vital next step is needing medical care, so that their body's genes don't continue to make them into something more of who they know they are not. I've seen kids as young as four know who they truly are. Can you imagine the suffering of growing up and all the development in life put on hold because a law says you cannot do anything about it until you are 18? At that late point, it becomes much more difficult to undo. Further, puberty is hard enough for those of us going through changes from boy to man or girl to woman. What about when puberty forces you daily, bit by bit to become less of what you were meant to be?

We know this risk because of the enormously high rates of suicidal thoughts and actions among transgender youth. We could help prevent it, but this piece of legislation indicates the State would prefer their death over helping them manage and be who they truly are and grow into healthy neighbors and community members, again whom I proclaim are loved by God through it all.

Please oppose SB 480. You remain in my prayers and those of my church.

Thank you.
the Rev. Nick Utphall
Advent Lutheran of Madison Christian Community
Madison, Wis.

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Melanie Fritz and I am a resident of Dane County. I've lived in Wisconsin for 2 years and I am a physician who is proud to care for all Wisconsin residents.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. These bills will cost lives if they are passed. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

Furthermore, I am opposed to these bills because my professional and ethical imperative as a doctor is to take the best possible care of my patients - and these bills would prohibit that. It is unconscionable for the state of Wisconsin to interfere in the patient-doctor relationship in this way and these bills must not be passed.

Sincerely,

Melanie Fritz
Dane County, 53711

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Amy Zelenski and I am a resident of Green County. I've lived in Wisconsin for 20 years and work in healthcare.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. These bills will cost lives if they are passed. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin. It is unconscionable for the state of Wisconsin to interfere in the patient-doctor relationship in this way and these bills must not be passed.

Sincerely,

Amy Zelenski
Green County, 53508

To the committee for the hearing on SB 480,

As a voting Wisconsin resident with 2 young children of my own, who has mentored dozens of others through my involvement in church youth organizations, there is nothing more critical for us to protect for the future of America than their access to the life-saving health care that this bill is trying to prohibit. I implore you to think about the lives you will put at stake if this bill passes.

Mental health for transgender youth is at risk with merely the introduction and dangerous rhetoric of this bill and the passage would guarantee the senseless and avoidable death of children who feel attacked, unwelcome and unsafe for merely being who they know that they are. The passage of this bill would not "stop children from making "life-altering" decisions " as the bill's co-sponsor Sen. Duey Stroebel (R-Saukville) has said - instead it would cause those life-altering decisions as trans youth would be at risk for higher rates of depression and suicide because of these attacks on them by irresponsible lawmakers like Sen. Stroebel.

The decision to seek medical care for a minor child should be at the sole discretion of the guardians and the health care providers who are experts in their fields. They understand best what each individual child needs and should be free to practice that free of the threat this bill would impose.

Please vote no on AB 480 and protect the trans youth of Wisconsin.

Thank you,
Nicole Schmidt

2000 W Barley Way
Appleton WI

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Heidi Herro, and I am a resident of New Berlin. I've lived in Wisconsin for 39 years and have two children of my own. I love it here and feel so fortunate to call Wisconsin home.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because my children to be brought up in a place that embraces our differences and allow individuals to become their most true self.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Heidi Herro
New Berlin, WI

Dear Senate Members,

I am the parent of a 13 year old transgender boy. He transitioned at age 8 and has never showed any hesitation or question of his gender since that time. Although he was assigned female at birth, he is all boy.

He has struggled with his mental health, but with the consistent support of family members, friends and allies at school, and good medical care, including regular therapy, he is thriving.

He is currently on puberty blockers. He is set to start testosterone in a year. He hates shots. Imagine all of the childhood terror at doctors offices. That's him. And yet he is signing up for a lifetime of shots every other week. There is no way he would do that if he weren't certain, deep in his soul and his psyche that he is a boy and he wants to be a man.

No one wants their kid to be trans. The statistics on depression and suicide are terrifying. 42% of trans youth attempt suicide. Our son was already having suicidal ideation at age 8. His mental health has improved significantly with the support of family and knowing that he can live his truth and develop into the gender he is, with doctor-supported gender-affirming health care.

If he were denied this health care, he would develop into a woman's body. He would grow breasts that he would later have to surgically remove. I can assure you, his mental health would suffer greatly and he would likely become suicidal again.

If this ban is passed, we will be forced to uproot our family from Wisconsin to find a state that supports our sons health care needs. We are the fortunate ones that have the financial means to do so. But it also means losing the social network that is also so important to our child's mental health.

Every medical association supports gender affirming care for youth. It's terrifying that politicians are making these decisions for families. Individuals should have the right to make their own medical decisions. Supporters of these bans say they are protecting children. But when the suicide numbers drastically rise for trans youth, you'll see the exact opposite is true.

Imagine it was your child who was trans, who is certain they are a gender different than they were assigned at birth. What would you do? Would you deny their true identity? Would you force them to go through puberty that makes their body dysmorphia far worse? Put yourselves in our shoes for a minute. It's a very difficult situation. We only want our kids to grow into healthy, thriving adults, like every other parent out there.

Please, I beg you, do not support this ban.

Sincerely,
Madeleine Niebauer
Middleton, WI 53562

To members of the Senate Committee on Health.

My name is Elly McGraw Chybowski. I live in Madison & have been a proud Wisconsinite my entire life. For 34 years I was a nurse practitioner in the Madison School District. During that time, I worked with a number of students who are transgender. I wonder how many of you deal with children in any capacity. Have you taken time to personally reach out to children who are transgender and their parents? What is your understanding of the issues? Do you care, or are you just following the Republican playbook that seems quite discriminatory.

Republicans talk about parental rights. Yet bill 480 is specifically taking the rights of children and their parents away. It seems to me that parents, the children & their health care providers know what is best for the children... not politicians. Do some if you have medical licenses? Bill 479 seems to be dictating how physicians practice. This seems so wrong.

During my years as a school nurse, I had students commit suicide because they were transgender & misunderstood. My WI upbringing in Dodgeville taught me to be loving, accepting & kind to my neighbors. I believe we are all human beings trying to make our way in this complex life. How do these bills support our youth? What purpose do these bills serve? Aren't there more important issues like healthcare for all, reducing child poverty, or education?

LGBTQ youth have enough struggles in life. I plead with you, don't make life more difficult. Let's be compassionate & loving & do all we can to support our youth. PLEASE.

Please vote no on Bills 479 & 480.

Thank you for considering my plea.

Elly McGraw Chybowski
Madison, WI. 53717

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Melissa Ives, and I am a resident of the city of Neenah. I've lived in Wisconsin for 23 years and worked in Wisconsin even longer. I am also a parent.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because I have sat up holding my child's hand to keep them from harming themselves as they ask me why were they born in the wrong body. This isn't a political issue. This is a healthcare issue. There are protocols already in place to make sure a child is ready for gender affirming care. Each case is different and only doctors, mental health professionals and parents are able to make the choices necessary for each child.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin. Last year, a classmate of my child told them that if he was like my child he would kill himself and told my child this is what they should do. Let that sink in. What would you do if someone encouraged your child to kill themselves? But these laws you are trying to pass are making it ok for others to treat my child horribly.

I want my child to be safe. It is a basic need and want of all parents regardless of political position or religious background. If laws like these pass, we will seriously need to consider moving out of Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Melissa Ives
City of Neenah

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Xanthe, and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 16 years. I have lived here my whole life. I never ever thought it would become a place where I would be scared to just be myself. I have two older siblings, an older sister who has a baby that is a few months old and an older brother. I Have divorced and remarried parents, my dad got remarried into a much healthier marriage with my step mom. My biological mother kept on relationship hopping. I grew up living in two different houses with two very different environments. My dad's house was healthy while my biological mom's house I was going through neglect and different forms of abuse. Do you really think you should *encourage* behaviors like this? For someone just being who they are?

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because I am a transgender youth. No one deserves to live in a world of fear, if you implement these bills suicide rates of transgender youth **WILL** go up and you will be the cause of that if you vote yes. I do not deserve to be scared for my well being just because I am transgender. Politicians and other people do not need nor deserve to know what my genitalia is. That is disgusting and predatory. Children do not deserve to go through this.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Xanthe

Madison, 53706

I am the Rev. Dr. Julia Burkey and I serve as the Senior Pastor of Orchard Ridge UCC in Madison Wisconsin.

I am writing this testimony in opposition of SB 479, because all Doctors have the right to do what they need to help their patients have flourishing lives, as I have seen medical care for my youth literally save their lives.

Every single human being is a gift from God, and God works in and through each of our lives, changing us in body, mind and spirit, through our whole lives.

Transitioning and gender affirming care not only saves life, but it affirms what GOD is doing in our lives, as some of the most spiritual soul-searching experiences for these youth are in their decisions to transition.

Health care is a human right, and to make sure to protect these trans beloveds is of highest priority for me as a spiritual leader in this day and age.

Please oppose this bill, and help save lives and be on the side of a God of Love.

Thank you,

Rev. Dr. Julia Burkey
Senior Pastor, Orchard Ridge UCC
Madison, WI 53711

Dear Legislators,

I am writing to you about Senate Bill 480

I know a number of people who are LGBTQ+ and who suffer with the crises of determining why they don't feel they are part of the norm. Several youth I have known have gone to the extreme decision to end their lives.

My daughter received her medical degree and then went to Columbia University in New York City to receive her psychiatry degree. She studied with a psychiatrist professor who works with people from all over the world whose sexual identities are non-binary. Doctors with this training are prepared to help young people struggling with their sexual identity.

Legislators who are not trained in this way are not prepared to make decisions about young people's sexual identities. In writing bills like Assembly Bill 465 you are making life decisions impossible for young people struggling with their sexual identity and also for doctors who are working to help young people and their families make the best medical and psychological decisions about their sexuality.

I ask that you vote against the passage of Senate Bill 480.

Thank you for your careful consideration of letting youth, parents and medical personnel make their own very personal decisions.

Sincerely,

Lynette Miller

Madison WI 53726.

To the Senate Committee on Health,

Please vote NO on SB 479 and SB 480. I'm a parent of school-aged children in Verona, Wisconsin and am appalled that this Senate is even voting on these measures.

While these bills may merely be an attempt to please anti-trans constituents in your districts or attack trans families, please also understand that safe and reversible puberty-pausing medical care and hormone therapy is used for a variety of medical conditions for minors and this proposed legislation hurts more than just trans families. Please research the various FDA approved uses before banning care options to both conservative and liberal Wisconsin youth. If interfering with trans families isn't despicable enough, you're also banning medical care options for a wide variety of families if you vote in favor of these naive bills.

Please leave medical care to the doctors.
Vote NO!

Sincerely,

Rachel K.
Verona, WI

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Nick Famularo, and I am a resident of Middleton. I moved to Wisconsin last year and I'm proud to now call it home.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because gender-affirming care is safe, saves lives, and is supported by every major medical organization in the country.

Politicians have no business inserting themselves into personal healthcare decisions, including on matters related to the health and wellbeing of LGBTQ+ youth.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families. Licensed medical professionals already know what is best for their patients. The government doesn't need to weigh in.

I don't want to live in a Wisconsin that isn't safe for the LGBTQ+ community. **Please vote no on SB 479 and SB 480.**

Sincerely,
Nick Famularo
Middleton, WI 53562

My name is Sharon Cook. I am a resident of Senate District One, a mother, and an active voter. I am writing to ask you to please oppose Senate Bill SB 480.

I am deeply concerned by the intense focus on defining and controlling sex and gender in the public sphere. I am horrified at the insistence that our state representatives think they have a better understanding of the needs of a child than the parents and community who know that child best.

This bill is hurtful. As a pastor, I had the great blessing to work with children and youth. In 10 years of working in congregations, and 8 years of overseeing summer camps, I was fortunate enough to care for youth who are transgender.

Transgender kids who had the support of their families found ways to thrive. They shared the same struggles of other teenagers, but essentially found a way to grow into healthy, productive adults.

Transgender kids who lacked support from their families struggled. I watched students develop eating disorders, self-harm, and suicidal ideation. I saw students abuse alcohol and other drugs. I watched them give up on their dreams to attend college or do anything meaningful with their lives.

Most tragically, I worked with one student who was not even able to talk about his gender and sexuality with his parents. Outwardly, he seemed like the perfect student. Straight As, many friends, lots of extra-curricular activities, the first one to volunteer to help. And that was part of why it was so painful when as a 16-year-old, he took his own life. We were all shocked. We were all devastated.

Because as difficult as life is when you are transgender, it is harder still when you can't be yourself. When the world has so convinced you that you are subhuman that you actually believe it.

This bill is unbelievably harmful. You may not know kids who are transgender. But I do. And I know that receiving care – physical care, psychological care, emotional care – is what makes a difference for these kids. It is literally the difference between life and death.

Please. For all of our kids. For their very lives. Please oppose Senate Bill SB 480

Sharon Cook

Kylan Bartel
Regarding SB 480
10/11/2023

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Kylan Bartel and I am writing to express my opposition to SB 480. As a Wisconsin resident, I am testifying about the harm that this bill would pose to transgender individuals and medical providers in our state.

I am transgender. When I was 17, I was fortunate to receive top surgery from a medical provider in Wisconsin. The decision to undergo a permanent surgery was not one I or my family made lightly. I consulted with a psychologist, the surgeon, and did my own research, all with my parents at my side. Thankfully, my insurance, seeing how the surgery would positively impact my life, agreed to allow an exception to their policy and covered the surgery even though I was a minor. It is rare for minors to undergo permanent gender-affirming care, but in my case, I was only months from turning 18 and allowing me to get the surgery earlier enabled me to have time in the summer to recover.

I believe that, when it comes to medical care, experts in medicine should be the ones to make regulatory decisions. These experts have spent years studying medicine so that they can be equipped to serve their community. As you already know, all major medical associations endorse gender affirming care. Like any medical intervention, there are risks involved. But these risks are best worked out between a patient, their family, and the experts. Preventing medical providers from providing necessary care forces them to stray from the Hippocratic Oath and violate their ethical standards.

If you are truly concerned about the physical and mental well-being of transgender young people, there are many real issues that need to be addressed, such as high rates of depression and suicide, school safety (according to GLSEN, 75% of transgender youth feel unsafe at school), and homelessness (according to the Trevor Project, over 35% of transgender youth experience housing insecurity or homelessness). In fact, preventing transgender youth from accessing necessary medical care will only worsen these issues. Research from the Trevor Project in December 2021 showed that transgender minors who received gender-affirming hormone therapy had almost 40% lower odds of depression and suicide attempts. To protect trans youth, we need to ensure that their right to affirming health care is protected, not rolled back.

Thank you for your time. Your consideration of these matters is appreciated.

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Stefani Butts, and I am a resident of Monroe in Green County. I've lived in Wisconsin for 20 years and I work as a Teen & Child Advocate for Green Haven, serving domestic violence survivors and their children. I also serve on the Executive Committee for Green County Democrats & belong to the Board of Directors for NAMI of Green County.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because I believe the government has no business interfering in the private medical decisions minors make with their guardians and doctors. Of the 151,000 students participating in Wisconsin sports, only *six* would be affected by this bill. That's targeted, petty, and unhelpful. Gender Affirming Care is backed by science, medical professionals, and mental health professionals worldwide. The misinformation and fear mongering about what Gender Affirming Care consists of has poisoned the opinions of so many.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin. I have personally witnessed the fallout of what these limitations would mean.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Stefani Butts

Monroe, 53566

My name is Rev. Dr. Jason Mack.

- I am the pastor of Underwood Memorial Baptist Church in Wauwatosa, WI
- and a resident of Madison.

- I am writing to you today to urge you, with all of my heart, to oppose Senate Bills Bill 479 & 480.

- I write to you today because I serve a God that loves.
 - A God that, according to our scriptures, literally *is* love (1 John 4:8).

- I write to you today because I serve a God who I believe sent Their own son – a very piece of themselves – to come to earth to show us how to love.
 - To show us that to live a life of love is to love the outcast, the left behind, and the marginalized.
 - I follow this son, this teacher, this guru, this lord.
 - I follow this example of God's love on earth every day to the best of my ability.
 - And I encourage my church to do the same.

- This teacher of love, this piece of God, was murdered.
 - Not by criminals.
 - Not by a rival religion.
 - Not by the outcasts that he served.

- This teacher of love was killed by an unholy alliance between the religious and political leaders of his day.
 - This teacher of love was killed because he dared to love the wrong people and told others to do the same.

- So, I write to you today to say, as loud as I possibly can,
 - that the hate and the scapegoating of the trans community that is present in this bill,
 - has nothing, absolutely nothing,
 - to do with Jesus or the God that sent him.
 - And I, for one, will speak out against it as long as I have breath in my lungs.

- Because I don't just write to you today as a pastor. I write to you as a parent.
 - A parent of a trans youth who every day must watch as their country, the leaders who are supposed to be there to protect them, threaten their very existence.
 - They're just a kid.
 - Just trying to love their life and love their friends and get into college.
 - They shouldn't have to worry if their very existence is going to be outlawed.

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

I am firmly against Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because my family has personal experience with the importance of gender affirming care for youth. It is vitally important to continue to make these life-saving treatments available.

My name is Mary Hayden and I am a resident of Eau Claire. I've lived in Wisconsin for 75 years and have an adult child and a grandchild who are transgender. The child should not be discriminated against! The adults who support the mental health of transgender youth need support from the caring people of Wisconsin.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Mary Hayden

Eau Claire WI

My name is Dennis Ray. I live in Madison with the zip code 53714. As a Christian called on to love others as a tenet of my faith, I am compelled to ask that you not pass Senate Bill SB480. The thrust of this proposed legislation is unloving and uncaring toward parents and their children. Parents should not be compelled to not follow, nor be denied access to, the best advice of medical professionals in how to care for their children. This legislation denies parents their basic right to make decisions in the best interest of their children. At its heart, it is anti-family in a time when parents need the full support of the state to address the difficult challenges parents face in raising their children to reach their full potential.

Again, please oppose SB480.

Dennis Ray
Madison, WI 53714

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Virginia Coburn I am a resident of Whitewater. I have lived in Wisconsin for over 50 years and have been proud of Wisconsin's traditions of open government, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and justice for all citizens.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because they interfere with the freedom of individuals along with their doctors to choose the health care they need.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Virginia Coburn
Whitewater, WI 53190

Dear Wisconsin Senators,

I am writing to express my opposition to Senate bill SB480. I am a white, male, Christian who tries his best to follow the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth... the one who loved and cared for outcasts, be they prostitutes or lepers. He who cared for those who were powerless victims of His society.

There are many reasons for my opposition, but they include:

- 1) I have known children and youth who have recognized at a very young age that their birth gender was not who they were – including one in my own family and one who almost became a member of my family.
- 2) I am concerned about the mental health of young people in general, but especially those who are in the transgender community who are being singled out for special treatment (in a negative way) by a bill such as this. This adds stress not only to the child but also to the family.
- 3) Being a kid is not easy these days. We don't need legislators making it even harder for kids who are transgender, denying them best practice medical care and singling them out for what will be increased bullying and harassment.
- 4) I find it very worrisome that the Wisconsin senate is inserting itself into the doctor- patient relationship. Health care is hard enough to navigate these days. But the doctor, family and patient do NOT need a Wisconsin politician in the room with them when determining what is best for the patient. Unless you (as a legislator) are Board certified in this particular area, do not get involved.
- 5) At a time of shortage of Health care workers, it seems ludicrous to me to impose penalties on medical professionals – with their knowledge and experience – that might prevent them from using that knowledge and experience. Instead, we should be using them as a resource to determine whether legislation is appropriate here.

For these and many more reasons I oppose Senate Bill SB480.

Thank you for reading and considering what I have written.

Sincerely,

H. William Hausler
Madison, WI 53705

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Brooke Running, and I am a resident of Mount Horeb. I have lived in Wisconsin my entire 40 years. I am a mom, daughter, sister, friend, school counselor, and LGBTQI+ advocate.

I am emailing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because they will do unnecessary damage and harm to the LGBTQI+ community.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQI+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Brooke Running
Mount Horeb, WI

Ashley Green (he/him/his) - Mount Horeb (53572)

Madame Chair and Senate Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony. I'm humbled to stand as a parent with the many courageous voices who spoke last week and who do so today.

I'm the father of a fifteen year old transgender girl who receives gender affirming healthcare, and I ask that you oppose Senate Bills 479 and 480.

The care that our daughter has received - from her deeply thoughtful, well-informed team of healthcare providers - has been absolutely transformative in terms of her well being. Her mental and emotional health have been greatly improved and sustained through this care. We have never known our daughter to be more confident, happy, or optimistic about her future. To be clear, her healthcare is not "only" gender affirming; it is life sustaining for our daughter.

Passage of these bills, however, would cause direct harm to the physical, mental, and emotional health of my daughter and to the many other young people who are a part of this vulnerable community in Wisconsin. Removing this access and threatening their providers would be devastating in its toll on all of our families.

I don't know if my words can persuade already hardened hearts. So much appears to divide us here in this moment.

What I can appeal to is the love that you have for your own children. As parents we are completely alike in that way. As families we are completely alike in that way.

And like you, I want my child to have all the resources she needs to be happy, healthy, and safe - including the healthcare that she needs to live fully and authentically.

And so my appeal is simple: from one parent to perhaps another, I ask that you please oppose these bills.

Finally, to all the transgender and non-binary young people - in this room and in our larger community - please know that you are seen, supported, and loved.

Thank you.

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Lara Dodge, and I am a resident of Menomonie (Dunn County). I've lived in Wisconsin for #20 years and identify as cis-gender female heterosexual. Aka, a female that identifies as a female and is attracted to members of the opposite sex (male). I grew up near a small town that had a strong sense of "us vs them" that led them to be extremely closed minded towards anyone that didn't fit their 'accepted profile". However, my family – which includes at least 3 individuals that identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community – for the most part has always felt strongly that we should 'live and let live'. We should love people as they are, and more importantly, despite the socially excepted 'norm' right now, we should not treat difference as something to be feared, these are whole, competent, and/or exceptional individuals and it is NEVER alright for other people to dictate how other people want to experience their life and body. Apart from harm or death to other birthed/born individuals.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because I cannot and will never condone anyone, or anything (as in government or corporations) to dictate to anyone how they should or should not use their body. Protect each person on an individual level by letting them choose! As a woman I am currently standing on what one might call 'the losing side' of history and I suffer daily for it. Why would you ask even more people to suffer just so SOME people can somehow feel "safer" because they get to keep their pocket of ignorance? That isn't fair, none of what any of these LGBTQ+ individuals identify with is harming anyone that does not identify that way. There is research and evidence suggesting that the highest suicide rates are in the LGBTQ+ community and that isn't because of their sense of self, that's because of how they are made to feel by the ignorant and fearful!

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Lara Dodge

Menomonie, 54751

Dear Senate Committee,

I am writing to ask to firmly and vocally oppose SB 479 and SB 480.

As the parent to a nonbinary child, it is heartbreaking to see these bills come forward. My child deserves to thrive as much as any other child. These bills make them feel as if they don't belong, as if they can't trust the adults around them, and that they can't trust our medical providers to care for them. There is nothing wrong with my child. They are who they are and they deserve the same as every other child, boy, girl, or however they identify.

I and other Wisconsinites like me demand politicians stop playing political games with the lives of trans youth. They deserve to live their lives freely. The trans community demands to be treated fairly like anybody else.

We must stand up for the privacy, freedom, and bodily autonomy of LGBTQ+ Wisconsinites and keep politicians OUT of our healthcare. We support the freedom to access healthcare and oppose the Trans Medical Care Ban, which would deny life-saving care to trans youth.

Sincerely,

Amy Washbush
Madison, WI 53704

Dear Members of the Senate Health Committee:

I am very, very much against Senate Bills 479 and 480. I am a grandmother to a wonderful and beautiful transgender grandchild. I cannot imagine that she would not receive the good care of her physician and parents. I used to be sad she lived in Minnesota because it was so far to travel to visit. Now I feel she is safe—safe from those who wish ill upon her.

My name is Terri Mauel. I am a Registered Nurse and recently retired after working for 45 years in the hospital including ICU and ER, Home Health Care, and Medical/Surgical units with the most recent 28 years having worked in the Berlin Area School District as their District School Nurse. **I have cared for many students including several who identify in the LGBTQIA+ community. I am also related to several LGBTQIA+ members including my very dear transgender grandchild. I am writing to voice my support for allowing transgender affirming care for every age including minors in Wisconsin without repercussion from the government. This is not a government decision—this is a private and personal decision to be made by the patients, their doctors, and their families.**

I want to note that the American Pediatrician Association, the American Psychological Association, The American Association of School Psychologists, the American Medical Association, and, of course, The National Association of School Nurses have all come out with statements in support of the Transgender person using facilities, participating in activities, and **getting care based on the gender they identify with.** They know that discrimination and stigma leads to bullying and harassment and thus an increase in rates of depression, suicide, self-harm, drug and alcohol abuse, homelessness, and other negative health outcomes. **The 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey found 40% of 28,000 transgender respondents attempted suicide.** That's 10,800 people who tried to kill themselves. (2.6 million or 1% of the US population identifies as transgender.)

Gender is not solely an XX and XY determination. There are children born with XXY, XYY, and XXYY. There are also studies that have shown that there are genetic components and hormonal levels which influence a person's gender identity. Brain imaging has also found differences in the LGBTQ+ members as compared to cisgender members. And, of course, there are those who are considered intersex which can be combination of various reproductive organs. Gender is much more fluid than what many of us have been taught. It is also seen in other populations in our world and in our literature over hundreds of years.

I believe you all want every LGBTQIA+ Wisconsin citizen (including our transgender youth) to be seen and to feel safe. I know you want all our people to grow, to learn, and to work and live in a caring and supportive environment. No one should fear that their right to feel free and to feel safe is not so. Transgender people including minors who live in Wisconsin are Wisconsinites; they are human beings. Treat them as such with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Your no vote will save many lives.
Thank you.

Terri Mauel, RN
Berlin, WI 54923

Wisconsin Senate Committee on Health
Attn: Senators Cabral-Guevara, Testin, Felzkowski, Jacque, Hesselbein, and Carpenter

11 October 2023

Dear Senators,

I am writing today in opposition to SB479 and SB480, which would criminalize gender-affirming healthcare for trans minors in Wisconsin. I am a constituent who lives in Green Bay with my wife and two adolescent children. I strongly believe that these bills are not in the interest of the people of Wisconsin whom you represent. No major medical professional organization, nationally or statewide, supports the criminalization of trans healthcare, because there are no reputable studies to show that providing gender-affirming care to trans youth results in demonstrable harm. On the contrary, it is settled science that gender-affirming healthcare benefits trans youth in many ways.

It is not in the best interest of the people of Wisconsin for our state legislature to intervene in the medical decisions of Wisconsin families when safety and health are decidedly *not* at stake. These bills are part of a cruel attempt on the part of anti-trans individuals to legislate healthcare onto the bodies of others. They ask the legislature to penalize the adults who are experts — medical doctors who have studied pediatrics, LGBTQIA+ issues, and the needs of their minor patients, as well as supportive parents who know their children and are capable of acting in their children's best interests — as a way to deter adults from permitting minors to transition. This is bigotry parading as concern. This is politics parading as healthcare. These bills are bad bills, on the wrong side of history, and will cause real harm to the trans youth and adults of Wisconsin and the people who love them.

Trans people have always existed. They always will exist. There is nothing to be done about that, whether the members of this committee personally believe trans people *should* exist or not. The horse is out of the barn, here. No one cares how comfortable you, personally, are with the existence of trans people. The world has changed, is changing, will continue to change. The question in front of you is whether the trans youth of your state, who exist, who you cannot prevent from existing, are to be permitted the full exercise of their human rights, or whether the Wisconsin Legislature will attempt to legislate them out of existence by denying them supportive medical care — an effort that is doomed to fail, and will without question be ridiculed by future generations.

The only thing medical care bans can do is hurt trans people. They punish them by making them wait. They force trans youth to experience puberty out of step with these young people's understanding of who they are and what their bodies should look like. They do this in defiance of what these young people's parents want for them (because trans youth *already* can't access supportive medical care if their parents don't want them to), in defiance of what their doctors understand to be the best course of action for them, at the whim of a cabal of bigots writing copy-paste bills that ideologically motivated, gerrymandered majorities in state legislatures take up because they're more interested in playing to their base than in governing.

If SB479 and SB480 make it out of your committee, it will be because the members of your committee who supported them made a deliberate decision to do something shameful, small-minded, and harmful to the people of Wisconsin, and that would be a truly disappointing outcome for myself, my family, and my community.

Sincerely,

Ruth Homrighaus

Green Bay WI 54303

I, Christina Urban, am a registered voter/neighbor/community member in Madison I have lived here for 24 years and am a proud Member of the LGBTQ community and a meaningful part of our Madison community.

As a member of this community, **I urge you to vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480** as they are likely to

... cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

... negatively impact the well-being of my community members. It is already difficult enough to access medical care. Please do not add unnecessary challenges to families of transgender individuals.

... cause medical providers in areas where there are already too few, to leave the state for areas where they are allowed to practice in alignment with their medical training and professional ethics.

I know you share in my care for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you **OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480 today**. You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,
Christina Urban (53716)

I so desperately wish I hadn't received an email this morning including the phrase "same room as last week" from a trans advocacy organization. I am so bone dead tired of defending the integrity of trans individuals. I'm tired of receiving tear-filled phone calls from my spouse that another piece of dehumanizing legislation has been introduced in the state we call home – a state we hope to continue to call home but have started to have doubts, especially as I am not only a trans person, but also a health care provider operating under a scope of practice to prescribe and monitor medications in pursuit of the highest care of patients.

As a healthcare practitioner, I consider myself an asset to our state, but that state has repaid me by introducing and passing legislation that is transparently – and believe me, the entire trans community is understanding the message – moving to eradicate myself and people like me. I went to many years of school to gain the knowledge and expertise needed to care for patients, and a number of years in post-graduate training as well. I have earned the right to call myself an expert in my field. I frequently tell my patients that with my expertise in medication management and their expertise in their own life, we can work together to find a treatment that meets their needs. And now the state government is trying to wedge itself into my exam room, with restrictions that run absolutely counter to the established evidence base. This is an absolute insult to healthcare providers.

A somewhat overlooked aspect of this bill is that the investigatory and corrective duties of this prohibition lies with the Boards of the respective healthcare professions. This was curious to me. I was informed by my healthcare colleagues that Board members are typically appointed by the governor upon the recommendation of private healthcare professional organizations. I was shocked to learn that not all Board members are healthcare professionals; for example the current Wisconsin Medical Examining Board has three public members who are not physicians. Make no mistake, Boards are far from apolitical, and this bill will take medical decisions out of the hands of patients and healthcare professionals and into the hands of unelected, non-experts, with who-knows-what motivations and affiliations.

I'd like to specifically address a certain bit of language in this bill: that these prohibitions do not apply to "any procedure undertaken because the minor suffers from a physical disorder, physical injury, or physical illness that would, as certified by a physician, place the minor in imminent danger of death or impairment". How, how can this legislative body not see that the restriction of gender-affirming care will cause significant mental health consequences that will place our children "in imminent danger of death or impairment"? Kids will die if they cannot access affirming care, that I guarantee.

Youth in our society are in what experts call a "suicide epidemic" and access to gender-affirming care is identified time and again as preventative for suicide in our youth. It is incredibly unclear to me who this law is trying to protect. I see it as a message to our most vulnerable youth that they are not welcome in the state of Wisconsin; but for any trans person who sees this – that is not true. You are welcomed, loved, and celebrated by so many Wisconsinites. The writers of this bill, despite their title, do not represent us, the people.

For so many reasons, you must do the honorable thing and vote no on SB480.

Anna Marceau

Good morning, Members of the Senate Committee on Colleges and Universities, Senator Cabral-Guevera, Senator Testin, Senator Felzkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, and Senator Carpenter,

I, Sarah Urban, am a registered voter/neighbor/community member in Madison, WI. I have lived in Madison for 24 years and in WI for my entire life and am a member of the LGBTQ community. My wife and I raised our family here.

I care about this bill because I am married to a transgender woman. My beautiful wife was a transgender child at a time when health care was not available for transgender kids. Had she been given the opportunity to receive health care, she would not have suffered the emotional distress and mental health conditions that she has struggled with. Since receiving gender affirming care, her overall health has improved, both physical and mental. I can only imagine how much better her early years could have been if care were available to her when she needed it.

As a member of this community, **I urge you to vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480** as they are likely to

... cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

... negatively impact the well-being of my community members. It is already difficult enough to access medical care. Please do not add unnecessary challenges to families of transgender individuals.

... cause medical providers in areas where there are already too few, to leave the state for areas where they are allowed to practice in alignment with their medical training and professional ethics.

I know you share in my care for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you **OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480 today**. You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Sarah Urban, 53716

Dear Senate Committee on Health

I'd like to share a story with you. In my first year as a hospice chaplain I met a lovely 90 year old woman. She was dying of cancer. As she shared her story she explained that she was born with a penis and ovaries. She was what we would identify today as Intersex. She shared that she knew that she was female as early as the age of 6. Gratefully her parents allowed her to identify as such. She eventually developed breasts but also had to shave a steady beard throughout her life. She married a man and they adopted and raised two children.

Society didn't talk about these things back in the early 1920's when she was a child. God had created this beautiful, kind human. But most of society would have called her a sinner and damned her no matter which identity she might have chosen. As she unfolded her life story to me it was clear that God had not made a mistake by creating her, we as a society were making a mistake by condemning her.

I beg of you to oppose SB 479 and/or SB 480. These laws will lead to lives lost and damaged. Please honor the way God creates his beautiful children. Allow trans families and individuals a right to gender affirming health care. You know as well as I do that when we are allowed to shine just as God created us, we are truly happier, more productive and loving people.

Can you imagine if society told you that you could not be who you feel you identify to be?

Do the right thing.

Sincerely,
Rev. Karon Sandberg
Appleton, WI

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Jenni Schimanski and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Madison for over 6 years, and I've lived in Wisconsin my whole life.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills for many reasons. I could write a long essay on the myriad ways these bills will harm both trans youth and doctors in our state, but I know you'll be hearing all of those facts and statistics and more from other Wisconsinites who also care strongly about this legislation. Instead, I want to talk about a piece of Wisconsin's history that I only just learned about a couple months ago.

In 1982, Wisconsin became the first state to outlaw discrimination based on sexual orientation, earning us the nickname the Gay Rights State. I was surprised to learn that Wisconsin was a leader in equal rights and even more surprised that a Republican governor signed this law. The governor who signed AB 70 into law, Lee Dreyfus, said that he signed it to "protect one's privacy" because "government should have a very restricted involvement in people's private and personal lives". I agree with his reasoning wholeheartedly, and I believe that exact same logic should be applied to these current bills. The medical care that trans kids receive should be between themselves, their parents, and their doctors. Politicians have no business trying to control the medical decisions people make for themselves or the medical providers who help with those decisions. These bills are a gross overreach that completely ignore the fundamental Republican tenet of small government. I urge Republican lawmakers to remember Governor Dreyfus' words and stop invading the private and personal lives of trans people.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

There are many issues facing our great state of Wisconsin, and trans people and the medical care they receive are NOT one of them.

Sincerely,
Jenni Schimanski
Madison, WI 53705

Dear Sens. Cabral-Guevara, Testin, Felzkowski, Jacque, Hesselbein, and Carpenter,

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony. I regret being unable to attend the Committee on Health hearing for SB 479 and SB 480 in person.

The 14th Amendment to the Constitution grants all United States citizens equal protection under the law. Likewise, the Supreme Court has inferred that individuals have a right to privacy from government, a concept that has been held in some cases to apply to private medical decisions.

Transgender individuals should enjoy the ability to make decisions about their own health futures in consultation with their medical providers like all other Wisconsin residents. Government should not present an undue burden to individuals being able to access healthcare.

Please, **vote NO** to SB 479 and SB 480.

Sincerely,

Amber Lusvardi, PhD

Oshkosh (54902)

Senate District 18

Caitlin Benedetto
Testimony regarding SB 479 and SB 480
11 October 2023

To the members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Caitlin Benedetto, and I am a resident of Madison, Wisconsin. I am writing to the committee to express my opposition to the Senate bills 479 and 480. SB 479 allows doctors to be sued for providing gender affirming care to minors, and SB 480 bans gender affirming care for minors in the state. Both bills represent barriers to trans youth having access to the full range of health care they need to lead safe, healthy, and happy lives.

Research shows us that children become aware of their gender identity at a young age, and children's mental health outcomes are much better when they have access to gender affirming care. Bill 480, which bans all forms of gender affirming care for minors, would be extremely harmful to trans youth in Wisconsin if passed. The type of care that would be banned by this bill is evidence-based, well-researched, and necessary health care for trans young people. Trans youth and their families and health care providers should be the only ones making decisions about the health care they receive. It is not the Legislature's place to take those choices away from trans young people in Wisconsin.

Bill 479 would allow doctors who provide gender affirming care to minors to be sued. If passed, this bill would result in the targeting of health care providers who help trans youth receive life-saving care. As I stated before, decisions about gender affirming care should be made by the patients themselves, along with supportive family members and health care providers. Targeting the providers of this care places more barriers to accessing this care for the young people who need it.

Many trans young people feel that delaying gender transition-related care until they are eighteen is too long to wait. We know that transgender students that are denied gender affirming care are at greater risk for depression, self-harm, and suicide. These two bills would endanger the lives and wellbeing of trans children. I do not support these bills, and I strongly urge you not to pass them.

Thank you for considering this testimony.

Sincerely,
Caitlin Benedetto
Madison, WI

Dear committee members:

My name is Laura Komai and I am a resident of Madison. I have lived in Madison since I was a baby in 1972 and my parents moved here. I urge you to vote no on SB480 and SB479.

I am writing as a Wisconsin business owner and mostly lifetime resident of Wisconsin. I object to SB480 and SB479 and wish you would spend your time on things that would improve the lives of the people who pledge to serve, instead of punishing those whose lives you don't seem to care to understand. Deeply personal decisions should be between individuals, family members, caregivers and physicians. ALL children should feel safe and welcome in this state, and their physicians and caregivers deserve the trust that their experience grants them. People living their lives to their fullest potential are not a threat, rather it strengthens our communities.

Before I became a business owner, I believed the mythology of the rugged American business owner, toughing it out and doing it all on their own, and then I became a business owner and I realized that all of my work is for nothing if I don't have the customers, and if my customers do not have a life that allows them to treat themselves to stickers and to send thank-you notes and otherwise support my business. Please redirect your focus to actions that benefit the majority of citizens you are supposed to be serving: funding for public schools, improving air and water quality, strengthening infrastructure, and finding solutions for homelessness and poverty.

May your pledge to serve this state turn into action that actually serves it so that we move forward together.

Laura Komai
Madison, WI 53705

October 11th, 2023

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Amelia Hansen, and I am a resident of Madison, WI. I've lived in Wisconsin for 24 years and I am a biology graduate student at UW-Madison.

I am writing to urge you to vote no on Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480.

Based on actions that other states have taken to take away trans people's rights, we know that these bills only serve as a stepping stone for banning trans healthcare altogether, which is in direct opposition to scientific literature and the most recent WPATH standards of care.

These bills are not based on science and sense, but fear and prejudice. Numerous peer reviewed studies have shown the life-saving effects of trans healthcare. All these bills will do is isolate and harm a vulnerable community.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Amelia Hansen

(she/her)

Madison, WI 53703

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Asher Volquardsen, and I am a resident of the City of Eau Claire. I've lived in Wisconsin for 19 years and I am a trans man and dedicated advocate for mental health.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because I know that gender affirming health care saves lives. It saved mine and I was able to make it to 19 because I was able to begin gender affirming health care at 17.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Asher Volquardsen
Eau Claire, WI

Dear Legislators,

I'd like to share a story with you. In my first year as a hospice chaplain I met a lovely 90 year old woman. She was dying of cancer. As she shared her story she explained that she was born with a penis and ovaries. She was born what we would identify today as Intersex. She chose to identify as female early on as a child. She told me she knew she was female at the age of 6 and gratefully her parents allowed her to identify as such. She eventually developed breasts but also had to shave a steady beard through out her life. She married a man and they adopted two children.

Society didn't talk about these things back in the early 1920's, when she was a child. God had created this beautiful, kind human. But most of society would have called her a sinner and damned her, no matter which way she might have gone in terms of choosing her identity. As she unfolded her story to me I knew that God didn't make a mistake by creating her, we as a society were making a mistake by condemning her.

I beg of you to honor the way God creates his beautiful children and allow trans individuals and families a right to gender affirming care and support. You know as well as I do that when we are allowed to shine just as God created us, we are truly happier more productive and loving people.

Do the right thing.

Sincerely,
Rev. Karon Sandberg
Appleton, WI

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Lisa Gutzke. I live in Cottage Grove, WI and have been a resident of Wisconsin for 46 years. This testimony is in opposition to bills SB 479 and SB 480. The proposed bill does not align with international standards of care, research, or clinical expertise. All kids deserve to thrive; all kids deserve access to the health care they need to live their healthiest, happiest and most fulfilled lives. At its root, gender-affirming care is listening to, understanding, and supporting transgender/nonbinary young people and their families. This includes both mental health care and medical care. Gender affirming care is health care. It is specialized care provided by teams with training and expertise in evidence-based care, just like any other pediatric specialty provided to children.

Gender-affirming care is age-appropriate and provided with parental consent. There are countless families nervous and scared knowing that their child's life, and their family's future, depends on the outcome of SB 480. We know that gender affirming care is lifesaving. Trans and nonbinary people suffer disproportionately from suicidality and other mental health issues. According to a survey by the Trevor Project of over 40,000 LGBTQ+ youth ages 13 to 24, over 60% of trans and nonbinary youth reported engaging in self-harm and 52% had seriously considered suicide in the past year- which is far above national averages. The care medical professionals provide and the process they follow with each family is backed by every major medical and mental health organization in this country and the world. We call upon lawmakers to introduce legislation to promote the health, well-being, and safety of transgender and gender-diverse youth.

Sincerely,
Lisa Gutzke
Cottage Grove, Dane County, WI 53527

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Dan Bartel, and I am a resident of Bristol twp. I've lived in Wisconsin for my lifetime of 79 years. I have been a lifelong conservative and in most years have been proud to be a Republican. I attended and graduated from Wisconsin schools and the University of Platteville in engineering.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because while they are clearly discriminatory and not understanding of the needs of an important group of people, they are totally NOT NEEDED! This is a contrived issue to appease a minority of misguided people and if you think this is a vote getter...you certainly LOST mine and I will campaign that you lose more.

When there are so many subjects of value for the legislature to pursue, why are you working so hard to discriminate against this group of people. If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families. Please DEFEAT these bills and so such unneeded negativity.

Sincerely,

Dan Bartel

Bristol twp., Sun Prairie, WI. 53590

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Shannon and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for almost 20 years and I am a single working adult who enjoys crocheting, reading, and cooking.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bill 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to this bill because all this bill will do is isolate and vilify an already vulnerable community. Numerous peer reviewed studies have shown the life-saving effects of gender affirming healthcare for LGBTQ+ needs and beyond. This bill is not based on science and sense, but fear and prejudice.

If passed, this bill will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Shannon O'Donnell

Madison, 53704

To the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Oliver Bronk and I live in Stevens Point Wisconsin. I have lived in this state all my life and I consider it my home. I oppose SB 480, as it is a bill that would do substantial and cruel harm to our youth. I was one of those youth, those children you seem to care so deeply about protecting yet you'd rather target the care they most need. I was one of those kids who needed someone to see me for who I was. There were no surgeries, no mutilations as so many claim there are, yet they won't step foot near a trans person. Any trans person will tell you: this does not happen. At most, there is completely safe and scientifically proven therapies. At the very least, a proper name and pronouns. That is all these youth need sometimes: to feel seen. Respected. Safe. A bill that bans the care these trans youth need, desperately need, puts them in direct harm. Without the care I received from my doctor, the simple noting of my name in the system, I would have never felt safe around her, especially as I needed her most as I battled several illnesses in my youth. Surgery does not happen, is rarely ever considered, until 18. I am in my 20s now, and I still struggle to even receive that surgery. Banning the base care for our youth is the most dangerous act that can be taken toward the most vulnerable of our population. Oppose SB 480 and actually keep our youth safe.

Thank you.

Oliver Bronk
Stevens Point, WI

Written Testimony for 12 October, 2023
Senate Committee on Health
Senate Bill 480 - AGAINST

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,,

My name is Nick Eliot, and I am a long time resident of Ashland County, asking you to vote NO on Senate Bill 480.

I am here today as a Wisconsin resident currently working in the medical industry. This bill threatens life-saving healthcare for transgender youth and is in direct violation of standard best practices recommended by national organizations such as the American Medical Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Access to medical treatments should not be denied to only one class of citizens within a patient population. Patients, their families, and their health care providers should decide what medical care is in the best interest of a patient, not politicians.

At a time where physician and nurse numbers are low, and clinics are struggling to recruit enough good medical staff to serve their patients, this bill would make that challenge even more unsurmountable. Putting these restrictions in state statute would have an unreasonable impact on employers in Wisconsin, preventing our state from recruiting and retaining medical professionals, who would most certainly hesitate to live and work in a hostile environment where they are forced to violate current accepted medical standards and best practices. By limiting our available workforce, this bill negatively impacts every resident of Wisconsin not just economically, but by harming our ability to provide medical care to everyone in a timely manner.

If passed, this bill will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome. Youth across Wisconsin deserve health care that includes transgender youth. Please oppose SB480.

Thank you,
Nick Eliot
54806

I urge lawmakers to vote NO on SB 479 and SB 480. I strongly believe that restricting access to medical care for our transgender youth is an egregious violation of their rights and dangerous to their wellbeing.

Respectfully,
Rev. Kenneth Pennings

Associate Pastor for Congregational Life
Orchard Ridge United Church of Christ
Madison, WI 53711

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Jennifer Wick, and I am a resident of Milwaukee. I've lived in Wisconsin for 32 years and have been a part of the LGBTQ+ community for 19 years. I didn't always understand the importance of protecting the trans community, but I now know it's protecting humans' period!

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because not only will people be happy in their skin, but it WILL save lives! 82% of transgender youth committed suicide last year, and 40% attempted to commit suicide. Not only that 40% of youth homelessness comes from youth in the trans community.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Wick

Milwaukee, 53212

Rachel Rovinsky
Regarding all members of the Senate Committee on Health
October 11th, 2023

I am writing to oppose Senate Bill 480 (Trans youth healthcare ban). I am a trans graduate student studying biology at UW-Madison, and a Wisconsin resident, voter, and taxpayer. I want trans kids to be able to get the healthcare they need to survive and thrive. We know that suicide rates among trans kids are higher than that of their cis peers, and we know that access to gender-affirming care reduces these rates. Based on actions that other states have taken to take away trans people's rights, we know that this bill only serves as a stepping stone for banning trans healthcare altogether, which is in direct opposition to scientific literature and the most recent WPATH standards of care. This is not based on science and sense, but fear and prejudice. Numerous peer reviewed studies have shown the life-saving effects of trans healthcare, and attempts to ban this healthcare are only going to hurt children and their families.

Thank you for reading my testimony, and I hope you oppose Senate Bill 480.

Thank you,
Rachel Rovinsky
Madison, WI

Theodore Peña
417 West Dayton Street
Madison, WI

October 11th, 2023

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

Thank you for taking the time to read my email.

My name is Theodore Peña; I am a third-year astronomy graduate student at the University of Wisconsin – Madison, and I want to reach out to you to express opposition to the recent anti-trans senate bills (SB 479 and SB 480). It is deeply disheartening that these bills are being proposed. I have had the wonderful opportunity to teach hundreds of local Wisconsin students as a TA, and my understanding of the state was that it is a diverse, accepting place. Within the greater Letters and Sciences population, we have multiple trans undergraduate and graduate students in the astronomy department alone. I feel that these bills unfairly target their ability to receive the *necessary* healthcare and medical support that they need to live healthy, successful lives. This is especially important when it comes to the underage trans community, who are the easiest targets of increasingly common fearmongering.

Sincerely,

Theodore Peña

UW—Madison astronomy graduate student
(He/him)

Hello,

I am a Madison resident, and I am emailing to testify in relation to Senate Bill 480. I am testifying because banning gender-affirming care will kill people in the state.

Every major medical association (AMA, Endocrine Society, ...) agrees that gender-affirming care is (a) safe, (b) effective, and (c) life-saving. Simply put, you may not like trans children making permanent medical decisions at age 12, but that is when they decide whether or not to kill themselves. And the point of this bill is clearly to make more of our children make that particular irreversible medical decision.

The bill is horrendously-written. It includes no grandfathering for those already on hormones or puberty-blockers. It includes no carve-out even in circumstances of precocious puberty, which can happen even to cisgender children and is quite dangerous. The only treatment for this is in fact puberty blockers.

And most importantly, it bans procedures whose regret rates lie between 1 and 2%, and which are well-attested to save lives. In comparison, the regret-rates for some life-saving cancer surgeries is approximately 15%, and yet no one would consider banning it. We need this care for our minor children. I encourage the committee not to approve SB480.

Daniel Levitin
122 N Bassett St.
Madison, WI, 53703

Dear members of the Committee on Health,

My name is Soleil Young and I have lived in Dane County for 5 years, but before my parents moved, I also spent the first 13 years of my life in Wisconsin. I am writing in strong opposition to SB480. As a child, I was diagnosed with a rare disease and had my life saved by physicians at UW Children's hospital. All children deserve access to healthcare, including gender-affirming healthcare. This bill would prevent trans youth from healthcare they need, healthcare which saves lives.

This bill is not based on science or compassion, but instead disinformation and transphobia. Many peer-reviewed studies have shown that gender-affirming healthcare saves lives. Providing trans youth with gender-affirming care is suggested and endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the Endocrine Society, the American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association, and the American Psychiatric Association. Numerous studies have shown that providing trans youth with access to gender-affirming care results in better mental health care outcomes, and lower rates of depression, suicide, and self-harming behavior. In addition, side-effects from puberty blockers, which doctors do not even recommend until the onset of puberty, have shown to be reversible. To pass this bill would be to fly in the face of all credible scientific and medical evidence and would result in the further marginalization of a vulnerable population.

Sincerely,
Soleil Young

Dear Senate Committee on Health:

I oppose SB 479 and SB 480.

I have been a mental health provider for 13 years, and licensed in my home State of Wisconsin since 2013 in Green Bay. I went to UW-Green Bay for undergrad and UW-Milwaukee for graduate school. I have lived in Green Bay since 2008 with my husband and son. In my current practice as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, I see patients that are LGBTQ identified. I am extremely well versed in the health disparities facing my community and the social determinants of health that cause these disparities, like suicidality, homelessness, depression and anxiety, substance use and abuse, among others. Affirming Care is THE ideal treatment for these health disparities for LGBTQ youth and adults and it WORKS.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. Affirming Care is a worldwide ETHICAL standard of care for our LGBTQ community, based on peer reviewed research which recommends safe and effective medical and mental health interventions and the REMOVAL of barriers to accessing ethical care. What you are proposing is INCREASING BARRIERS to ethical treatment. The impact of this will be deadly. It will also be costly. Should Wisconsin lose its ability to practice Affirming Care, you will see increased hospitalizations, increased disabilities, increased homelessness, and increased mental health burden on those already burdened by discrimination, lack of support from their own families and communities, and employers. These measures would drive qualified professionals OUT of Wisconsin during a time when Wisconsin faces major shortages in health care workers. LGBTQ individuals, couples and families are growing in numbers, not lessening. Passing any legislation that places barriers in the way of healthcare will devastate the healthcare system for future generations. Not only is this proposed legislation morally and ethically deplorable, it is also the very oppressive, hateful, discriminatory practice that causes the need for Affirming Care to begin with. You do not represent the best interests of Wisconsin if you support this oppressive legislation. Please do what is your legal and ethical obligation to fight discrimination, not legalize it.

Thank you.

Breyan Donath-Skeen, LCSW, SAC-IT
She/Her/Hers

Prevea Behavioral Care
De Pere, WI 54307

My name is Gregory Welles, and I am a resident of Verona. I've lived in Wisconsin for 12 years since I moved back in 2011. I grew up in Madison and went to Public school in Madison from 4th grade through graduation from UW Madison. My wife, daughter and son all live and work in Madison and Verona.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because they are terribly unfair to all children. I am a teacher in Madison and have seen first hand that children do indeed identify as transgender at a very young age.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families. I can not state this more emphatically!

Sincerely,

Gregory R. Welles

Verona, WI 53593

SB 479 and SB 480

Members of the Senate Committee on Health,

The constituents you were elected to serve include young people in need of gender-affirming care and parents seeking needed care for their children. The bills under consideration interfere unreasonably with their right to consult with qualified professionals and choose the best course of action for themselves or for beloved children.

Please set aside the assumptions that lie behind these bills. Please make an attempt to understand who needs gender-affirming care and why. Please consult--in good--faith the professionals who work with this population of children and parents. They all deserve your support, and they certainly deserve to live without your interference.

Sarah Jones
Madison

Members of the Senate Committee on Health,

The constituents you were elected to serve include young people in need of gender-affirming care and parents seeking needed care for their children. The bills under consideration interfere unreasonably with their right to consult with qualified professionals and choose the best course of action for themselves or for beloved children.

Please set aside the assumptions that lie behind these bills. Please make an attempt to understand who needs gender-affirming care and why. Please consult--in good--faith the professionals who work with this population of children and parents. They all deserve your support, and they certainly deserve to live without your interference.

Sarah Jones
Madison

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Grey Gerling and I've been a resident of Madison since 2002, having moved here from my birthplace of Fargo, North Dakota.

Fargo's conservative environment was the perfect microcosm for testing out the efficacy of bills like SB 479 and SB 480. There was no transition-related healthcare for minors and we were all completely unaware that a person could even be transgender or suffer from conditions like gender dysphoria. The vocabulary wasn't common knowledge and the internet had not progressed far enough as to make such concepts readily accessible.

And so, as a child whose body had begun to go through a terrifying and unwanted puberty, I had nowhere to turn. I pleaded, crying, with my teacher after a lesson about adolescence for some way to avoid this process. Did it have to happen to everyone? Could it be stopped? My distress was met with blank stares and flat denial. I was made to feel ridiculous for even suggesting the existence of such a concept.

Denied counseling and medical intervention, I was left frightened, confused, and alone. In the absence of any support, self-harming became my only outlet. I believed that if no one could help me, I could help myself by damaging the developing parts of my body before the process could be completed.

This is the environment legislature like SB 479 and SB 480 create. Taking aid away from minors does not and will not erase who they fundamentally are. It only results in terrified, desperate children lying on bathroom tiles in agony as they attempt to violently end an alien and incompatible developmental process which is steadily eating away at their psychological well being and very identity.

Don't let Wisconsin become a place where children have to experience what myself and so many others went through. Vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480.

Sincerely,

Grey Gerling
Madison WI 53719

Testimony on SB 480

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Andrew Twiton, and I am a resident of Madison. I'm a husband, toddler parent, and a third generation Lutheran pastor. My grandpa, dad, and I have all spent most of our ministries in the state of Wisconsin. My point being: Wisconsin is home, and Wisconsinites are my people.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bill #480. As a Wisconsinite and as a person of faith, I am opposed to this bill because it allows the government to tie the hands of medical professionals and families as they seek the best evidence-based care. Furthermore, this bill that purports to protect children goes against the advice of the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Nurses Association, the American Psychological Association, and more.

As a parent, I can't imagine seeking care for my child only to find out a group of politicians decided they knew more than my doctor.

As a pastor, I've journeyed with families as they've sought gender-affirming care. I've seen first hand the negative effects of when that care is withheld. And I've seen the positive, life-saving effects of that care when it is available.

I urge our elected leaders to take a step back from this bill out of love and humility. I urge you to vote NO and send a message to the LGBTQ+ youth in your districts and in our state that they are welcome, safe, and valued in Wisconsin.

Thank you,

The Rev. Andrew Twiton
Madison, WI 53716

Good morning, Members of the Senate Committee on Health,

I, Amelia Speight, am a registered voter & community member in Madison. I have lived in Dane County for my entire 28 years and am a proud member of the queer community.

I care about this bill/measure because growing up in the Madison-area I have always felt represented and accepted, which has enormously contributed to my sense of self worth and capacity to participate fully in my school, work, community, and family life. I know that if trans and gender non-binary youth do not receive the same acceptance in our state of Wisconsin, many lives will be lost to depression and suicide and many other individuals and families will choose to leave the state.

As a member of this community, I urge you to vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480 as they are likely to cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin. Gender affirming care is already difficult to access, requiring a large burden of "proof" for trans young people to receive even the mildest support in the forms of therapy, hormone blockers, and the freedom to live as their truest selves at school.

I know you share in my care for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you **OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480 today**. You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Amelia Speight
City of Madison, 53714

Good morning, Members of the Senate Committee on Colleges and Universities, Senator Cabral-Guevera, Senator Testin, Senator Felzkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, and Senator Carpenter,

I, Holly Marley-Henschen, am a registered voter in Madison. I've lived here for 13 years and am a member of the LGBTQ community.

I care about this bill because struggling with being open about my sexual orientation and gender expression has affected my mental health, my ability to support myself, and my ability to work. Because I was able to find support in being open about who I was, I am now a business owner and job creator in Dane County. I stand with everyone who also faces this struggle, particularly children.

As a member of this community, **I urge you to vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480** as they are likely to cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

In addition, these bills, if passed, will negatively impact the well-being of my community members. It is already difficult enough to access medical care. Please do not add unnecessary challenges to families of transgender individuals.

I know you share in my care for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you **OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480 today**. You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,
Holly Marley-Henschen
53704

I am writing to express my disgust at SB 479 and SB 480 appearing in the state legislature. The fascistic Republicans cynically pushing this for political gain should be ashamed of themselves. Gender affirming care has proven to drastically improve the quality of life and reduce suicide rates to those who receive it. If these bills are passed, there will be blood on the hands of all those who voiced support for and voted for them. If I could attend the hearing to voice my opinions, I would, but the hearings for these deeply unpopular bills just so happen to be in the middle of the day, when most people are at work or school. I look forward to the day when my trans friends will not have to constantly defend their basic right to existence from politicians who do not give a damn about the people they are supposedly representing.

Leo Thomas-Ryan

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health

My name is John S Grunseth, I'm 77 and a lifelong resident of Wisconsin.

As a retired HR professional and father of an adult transgender daughter, I urge you to vote "NO" on SB 479 and SB480.

These bills give the impression of outside agency "group think" directives that spread falsehoods about healthcare for transgender youth which intentionally or unintentionally harm our transgender youth. This fear of "if they're not like us, they must be wrong" does not provide equal rights under the law.

Contrary to what some believe, being transgender is not a choice nor a whim or have any religious implications. It's who these people are and how they were born. And, there is no minimum age where young folks know who they are. All they're trying to do is live their best lives openly and honestly. To deny and eradicate their existence is akin to horrors of the Nazi tenants.

Before you take a position on these bills, please ponder the following:

1. Study the facts.
2. Talk to a transgender young person and their parents. Hear first-hand the importance of having lifesaving mental/medical care available in Wisconsin.
3. Study the Trevor Project's 2022 Youth Mental Health Survey which found that more than 56% of trans and non-binary youth in Wisconsin have seriously considered suicide in the past year, while more than 21% of them have attempted it!
4. According to the Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health survey report (June 2021), LGBT youth experience higher rates of mental health disorders in general and have almost twice the rate of death by suicide compared to cis gender youth. Additionally, one study found that more than two-thirds of youth in the LGBT community experienced anxiety symptoms in the two weeks prior to their being surveyed.
5. Be aware that at least 74% of LGBTQ+ youth in Wisconsin have experienced discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.
6. Know that transgender young people are afraid to be who they really are due to the stigma associated with being transgender. And at least 35% of LGBTQ+ youth in our state have been threatened or harmed because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
7. Know that untreated mental/physical health of transgender youth has a strong negative impact on their ability to effectively learn.
8. How would you respond if a loved one or someone you know is or has a transgender youth? Would you deny them important potential lifesaving care?
9. Understand that passing this legislation does not help and will only harm transgender youth and their families.

John S Grunseth
Green Bay WI 54301

SB480 - opposed
Rev. Eldonna Hazen
First Congregational United Church of Christ
Madison, WI 53704

Thank you for reading my written testimony. I write to you as a lesbian, a Mom with 3 children (one identifying as non-binary), and a member of the clergy.

I work directly with many families who have direct experience with children who experience gender dysphoria. These families work diligently to with children through the process of understanding who they find their authentic self to be. These situations are not “whims.” They are genuine feelings, that often produce such anxiety that their very life is hanging in the balance. When adults fail to recognize what children experience, support them and help them in understanding their feelings, they are left to believe they are unworthy. Please understand medical intervention is not done on a whim. It follows meetings with primary care doctors, counseling with and without family, then intervention on the part of specialized doctors. To say this treatment is not needed until they are eighteen is to misunderstand and devalue the amount of work done. This work is done to save the lives of our children!

The faith community I serve understands the importance of medicine and science, which this bill ignores. Don't tell me there isn't research to back what I am saying, because I sat in hearings last week highlighting the tremendous amount of research and science related to gender affirming care. The faith community I serve values our young citizens, and affirm them in their own authenticity. When they need medical intervention to save their lives – we support that care!

I also work directly with many families who have cancer. There is absolutely no question about the care they need to save their life! I have not seen any bills prohibiting care for cancer patients under the age of eighteen to save lives.

I urge you to oppose this bill! Unless and until you experience the need for gender affirming care in your own lives or the life of your family, you have NO understanding of the care needed to save these young citizens. Please do not try to judge another family's need or pursuit of healthcare!

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Maggie Schnell, I am a resident of Madison, and I've lived in Wisconsin for 9 years. I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480.

SB 479:

Gender affirming medical care saves lives. Everyone deserves access to the medical care they need, be that gender-affirming care for trans folks or even cis folks who also make use of gender-affirming care. Some of the same hormone therapies and surgeries used by trans folks to affirm their gender are also used by cis folks who, in various ways, want their gender presentation to align with what feels good and affirming to them. If we allow doctors to be sued for providing necessary, life-saving medical care, doctors will be less likely to offer such care and patients will lose access even if the medical care is not prohibited by law. In addition, doctors may choose to practice elsewhere instead of Wisconsin due to the risk of lawsuits and, especially now, we cannot afford to lose good doctors in Wisconsin.

SB 480:

I believe that protecting young people is every adult's responsibility. We know that gender affirming care saves lives, and I believe it would be unconscionable to remove access to this lifesaving care for minors in Wisconsin. The gender affirming care offered to minors is reversible, and is given in consultation with parents and doctors. There is no legitimate reason to prohibit such care. I hope that even those here who are less than comfortable with the idea of gender affirming care would value the lives of young people above all. We must not remove access to this lifesaving medical care for Wisconsin's young people.

Thank you for your consideration,

Maggie Schnell
Madison, WI 53703

Aaron Lopez
Regarding WI State Legislative Hearing
October 11th, 2023

Hello,

My name is Aaron Lopez and I am a concerned Dane County resident and parent. I would like to state my formal opposition to the following bills:

Assembly Bill 479 (a civil cause of action for a minor injured by a gender transition procedure)
Assembly Bill 480 (prohibiting gender transition medical intervention for individuals under 18 years of age)

It is terrifying that legislators are considering bills that are founded entirely on pseudoscience and prejudice. These bills harm and isolate families by restricting freedoms and stripping healthcare from children and their parents. Moreover, it makes Wisconsin a worse place to live by introducing a division that shouldn't exist: there's no world where a cis child's health and lifestyle should be placed above or below that of a trans child.

Please voice your strong opposition to these bills.

Sincerely,
Your Constituent,
Aaron Lopez
(they/them)

Hello, Members of the Senate Committee on Colleges and Universities, Senator Cabral-Guevera, Senator Testin, Senator Felzkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, and Senator Carpenter,

I, Marcie Waters, am a registered voter/neighbor/community member in the Town of Center. I grew up in the area and recently moved back after living in Madison for a decade.

I care about this bill/measure because it will directly affect the mental health and quality of life for my LGBTQ+ neighbors and fellow Wisconsinites. We all deserve access to the healthcare that we need to live a healthy and happy life.

As a member of this community, **I urge you to vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480** as they are likely to cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I know you share in my care for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you **OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480 today**. You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Marcie Waters
54106

Aevi van der Stok

Regarding Senate Bill 480

10/11/2023

My name is Aevi van der Stok and I am a trans-nonbinary research assistant in chemistry at UW Madison and while I am currently a Wisconsin resident, I previously lived in Texas up until a few years ago. While it was not the only reason, increasing hostility towards the transgender community and the passage of laws targeting us was a contributing factor to my decision to leave Texas. I am testifying against Senate Bill 480, which seeks to prevent transgender youth from accessing gender-affirming care.

As a member of the trans community and former Texas resident I have seen firsthand the impact of bills that restrict transgender youth's ability to access life-saving gender affirming care. They do not actually serve to protect minors, nor do they reflect current scientific and medical knowledge regarding transgender youth and gender-affirming healthcare. Gender-affirming care for minors is always only done with the consent and approval of the youth's parents and medical providers, and usually consists primarily of puberty blockers which are safe and reversible and have already been used extensively to treat precocious puberty in cisgender children. Other methods of gender-affirming treatment such as hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and top surgery (ex: mastectomy) are generally only considered for older transgender youth (16-17 year olds) who have known they are transgender for multiple years already, and bottom surgery (gender-affirming surgery of the genitals) is not performed on minors. Claims of children being forced into irreversible gender-affirming treatment are completely unfounded and serve only to spread irrational fear and stigma around the trans community. The only situation in which this scenario occurs is the treatment of intersex youth via surgery and hormones – treatment that is often medically unnecessary and serves only to make their bodies conform to binary sex standards. And this scenario is explicitly allowed by SB 480. Why should the law consider it unacceptable for a young person who wants gender affirming care and has the support of their guardians and healthcare providers to get treatment to pause puberty and allow them more time to decide, yet consider it acceptable for an intersex child to be operated upon or treated with hormones even if it is medically unnecessary and potentially undesired? This bill does not protect youth from irreversible medical treatment, it serves only to police and enforce a rigid sex binary and restrict gender variance. Scientific and medical knowledge supports the safety, reversibility, and immense benefit of gender affirming care for transgender youth and current policy and guidelines surrounding gender-affirming care for minors already reflect scientific and medical advice and take a conservative approach to allow trans youth as much time as possible to make transition related decisions. There is no reason to further restrict their access to lifesaving care.

I felt the need to testify on this subject as I do not wish to see Wisconsin repeat the same harmful mistakes as the state where I used to reside, and I fear Wisconsin becoming as hostile to me and my community. Similar legislation in my home state and other states has served only to increase stigma against an already vulnerable marginalized community by targeting the most vulnerable – transgender youth. As minors, transgender youth do not have the ability to give testimony or defend themselves against bills targeting their existence. Therefore, I feel it is my responsibility as a transgender adult who has witnessed the fear such policies inflict upon them to speak up in their defense on their

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Heather Wentler, and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for all 38 years of my life. My husband and I are proud graduates of small-town public schools and UW-Madison and UW-Whitewater (respectively). We love our state and its diversity of lifestyles and opportunities.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bill 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because they hurt individuals in the long run and cause lifelong trauma and mental health issues that individuals may not be able to overcome. As a former school teacher, I saw how not having access to the healthcare my students wanted/needed affected their educational experiences, mental health, and achievements as they progressed into adulthood. Within my current profession, I work with many entrepreneurs and small business owners from across Wisconsin who are afraid to be their true selves and continue to suffer in silence due to the social stigma and overt oppression passing bills like these place on individuals.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. FULL STOP. Their lives will be *on* your hands. At a time when LGBTQIA+ youth (and adults) are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin now and always.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families. These decisions are never made in haste or rash judgement. If it was your child seeking this type of support would you want them to hide it from you and make unsafe alternative choices or be able to seek and get the support they need most by professionals? Please do not make decisions for other people's children and remember we are stronger together as we continue under the state motto "Forward".

Sincerely,

Heather Wentler
Madison, 53704

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Staci Marrese-Wheeler, and I am a resident of McFarland. I've lived in Wisconsin for 51 years and have served as an ordained, Christian minister for 30 years.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because it is discriminatory, dangerous and unwise policy. The moment the government starts making decisions for physicians, regarding which health care procedures are allowed for certain patients, then the government not only creates poor legislation for a certain set of health circumstances but also sets a horrible precedent that will impact many other health care situations.

Doctors, their patients and families of patients should be the ones deciding what is best for the patient's physical and mental health care, without fear of legal retribution. This is not a decision for the government to make. Wisconsin will lose doctors if bills like SB479 are passed and our state will not attract new physicians. Far worse than that impact on our healthcare system, lives of WI citizens are endangered by legislation like this.

Parents and doctors, together with minors, should be making decisions for the welfare of transgenders individuals. SB480 should not be legislating that highly personal decision.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Staci Marrese-Wheeler
McFarland, WI 53558

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Luke, and I am a resident of Wauwatosa. I've lived in Wisconsin for 23 years, my whole life.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills.

My name is Luke. I have lived in the state of Wisconsin for my entire life. I have also known, for my entire life, that I was not like all the other boys I grew up with. Even as a young child, decades before I had heard the words "transgender" or "designated sex" for the first time, I would sneak into my family's storage closet to try on dresses that had been otherwise discarded. I would cry as I was made to have my hair cut short. All my life I was told that my feelings about who I was were nothing more than a phase, that I would grow out of it. The idea that I could be trans, much less that such a thing would be good or even acceptable were hidden from me by a society which had no intention of accepting someone who refused to quietly accept the role I was given. For many years I thought that I was broken. That there must be something wrong with me, some deviation of my brain that made me unacceptable as a human. I tried desperately to become the man that every authority figure in my life told me I should be. I consider myself lucky to have survived this time of my life. I was suicidal and depressed for years. These feelings only grew stronger the more I tried to conform to the male identity I'd been assigned. I had nobody I could talk to about these problems, as any such concerns were dismissed out of hand in the best case. Or taken as sinful, sexual perversions in the worst case.

After I was able to break free from the repression of my teenage years, as I learned more about the beautiful diversity of this world, I came to understand that I was transgender too. That my identity was valid and good. I am transfeminine, and proud of it. Being able to socially transition, to wear gender affirming clothing and hairstyles, and to be accepted by my peers for who I was, drove away my suicidality. But being able to pursue medical transition made me excited to live. I am able, now, to look into my future and see a version of myself that is truly happy with herself.

This is the joy you wish to steal away from transgender youth. With this bill you would mandate that all transgender people endure the same period of self loathing that I lived through, all while continuing to allow intersex people with gender-ambivalent bodies to be subjected by their parents to potentially harmful, body altering procedures. While allowing cisgender youth to pursue the same types of gender affirming procedures denied to transgender peers.

Make no mistake, if this bill is passed into law, it will cause the suicide of many transgender youths. Their blood will be on your hands. Gender affirming medical procedures have been proven time and again by countless medical studies to significantly improve the lives of transgender people. To reduce depression and anxiety and the risk of suicide. Every major medical organization agrees that the benefits far outweigh the risks. With this bill you would impose your own bigoted worldview in between doctors and families. You would deny medical workers the ability to provide lifesaving care to trans youth.

This bill disgusts me. Do not allow it to pass into law. I beg you to listen to the voices of transgender people, their families, their doctors and mental health professionals. Every meaningful voice speaking on the matter is asking you to vote against this and similar provisions. I am begging you to do the same. Please.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Luke Eisner
Wauwatosa, 53225

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Allison Adelman, and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 2 years recently and for 18 years back when I was growing up here in the 80s and 90s. After 22 years away from WI, I decided to move back here from California to be closer to family.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bill 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to this bill because it would send the wrong message to minors in Wisconsin that they are not safe or welcome here, or valued for who they are. There are already countless barriers for minors to receive gender affirming care without it being banned: minors must already receive permission from their parents, and undergo years of meeting with doctors – not to mention jumping through insurance company hoops and perhaps not even being able to afford it – before they are able to receive care, even to simply delay puberty so that they and their doctors can take more time to be absolutely sure about anything more permanent by the time they are 18. We should absolutely be allowing and welcoming the accessibility of puberty delaying treatments and any other care deemed appropriate by minors' medical providers and families. Doctors who provide gender affirming care, including to minors, are following evidence-based practices, while minors who seek this care and are unable to access it have been documented to experience harmful effects to their mental health, including higher rates of suicide.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Allison Adelman

Madison, WI, 53705

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is E-Ben Grisby and I am a resident of Appleton. I've lived in Wisconsin for 19 years and I am proud to call the Badger State my adopted home after all of these years.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because our youth deserve to live whole, purposeful lives without shame or degradation.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

E-Ben Grisby

Appleton, WI

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Gillian Blake , and I am a resident of Stoughton, WI. I've lived in Wisconsin for 53 years and I have two children. One of my children is transgendered.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because gender affirming care is essential to the wellbeing of transgendered children.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,
Gillian Blake
Stoughton, WI 53589

Testimony Regarding SB-480
October 12, 2023

My name is Rev. Kate Mackey, and I am the Associate Pastor for Children, Youth, and Families at Orchard Ridge United Church of Christ in Madison, WI. I am writing to testify against the passage of SB-480, which would limit the ability of medical providers to provide adequate care to some of the most vulnerable members of our community: our transgender youth.

As an ordained minister I support and affirm the need to provide gender-affirming care to youth when appropriate. We are blessed in our faith community to have a diversity of gender expressions represented. I work regularly with several transgender young people and their families. I see the deep wrestling that often accompanies a child's life when their biological sex does not match their gender identity. My Christian faith teaches that each individual is created in the image of God, in the fullness of who they are. This includes gender diversity. We learn from our transgender siblings a deeper, more complete understanding of who God is and who we are created to be.

Moreover, Jesus taught us that those who exist on the margins of our society are especially near to God's heart. We are called as people of faith to stand up for those who have been oppressed and silenced, those who are hurting or in need of care. In the end, medical providers are the ones who are best equipped to provide the science-backed care that is needed for our young people to flourish. Medical care is a basic human right. Standing in the way of medical providers to provide gender-affirming care would be negligent of our responsibility as a community to care for these young people.

Please oppose Senate Bill 480 and support the rights of all of the people of Wisconsin.

Gratefully submitted,

Rev. Kate Mackey

Associate Pastor for Children, Youth, and Families
Orchard Ridge UCC
1501 Gilbert Rd.
Madison, WI 53711

To the Wisconsin Senate Committee on Health:

Hello, my name is Shanon Bartel from Mazomanie, WI. I am a Dane County citizen and mother of three. I am providing written testimony to oppose bill AB 480.

You are elected in office to be a voice, to support and keep safe all citizens of Wisconsin. Transgender people ARE citizens of Wisconsin. They exist whether you like them or not. It is frightening to me that you would pass legislation to harm an already marginalized group of people just to gain a few votes. Trans youth are already 4 times more likely to commit suicide, suffer higher rates of depression and anxiety and have a higher drug and alcohol use rate than that of their peers. But, you've heard all of this before.

So have you considered that perhaps you're actually LOSING your base? My husband was a Republican, but not anymore. I used to call myself an independent, not anymore. I morally can never vote Republican until you stop discriminating against minority groups. My father, who is a Vietnam veteran, and has seen and lived through countless events, has never voted in any election until the last presidential race, because that's how scared he was for his grandson.

You are NOT experts in the medical or psychology field, and those that are experts have come out opposing such bills. Transgender people have the right to obtain medical help, whatever that may look like for them, just like anyone else in this state.

My son was one of the lucky ones able to get the care he needed when he needed it without having to travel to another state, or jump through insurance hoops. This care helped him become the person he was inside, and gave him the confidence needed to achieve his goals. He graduated the valedictorian of his class, received the prestigious Herb Kohl Scholarship and achieved a perfect score on his ACT. He is currently a junior at the University of Chicago and is hoping to go into public interest law to help those less fortunate. If he couldn't receive the medical treatment he needed, none of the above would have happened. I'm not sure if he'd be here today.

So I beg you to please stop playing with people's lives. Listen to the experts. Let the parents, children, doctors, and psychologists figure out what the best plan for their child is.

I'd like to thank the committee for reading my testimony. I hope you will start supporting all of Wisconsinites.

Shanon Bartel
She/her/hers
Mazomanie, WI

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Rev. Erica Liu and I have been living in Madison, Wisconsin for twenty years. I have raised two children, now teenagers in this state. I serve as Pastor at Pres House, a Presbyterian campus ministry that serves students at UW-Madison. Since 2004, I have been ministering to young people from all over the state of Wisconsin.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because I know the incredible harm it will inflict upon already struggling young people. I have sat with countless, LGBTQ+ youth who have experienced rejection and shame from their communities because of who they are--at an age when they need and deserve acceptance and support, these bills only serve to instill more fear and further deprive them of resources they need.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,
Rev. Erica Liu
Madison, 53705

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

I am Rev. Valerie Showalter, and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for four years and serve as Pastor at Madison Mennonite Church.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Assembly Bill #SB480. As a Wisconsinite and a person of faith, I am opposed to this bill because I believe that access to life-affirming medical care must be a human right for all, including young people whose gender varies from the biological sex assigned at birth. Gender-affirming medical care reflects that human experience is diverse and complex.

If passed, this bill will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Rev. Valerie L. Showalter

Madison, 53711

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Cody Schara, and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 30 years and am proud to work for the University of Wisconsin and prepare the next generation of leaders.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because I believe in the motto of our state and believe in creating environments where all youth feel they can move Forward to live up to their dreams.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Cody Schara
Madison, WI 53704

To the entire committee, This is my written testimony against the anti trans bills being brought before this committee.

SB 479
SB 480

My 10 year old grandson was born in a female body.

As a child he was hyper active. As he grew older he was stressful, and anxious. The nightmares and anxiety began after he was 7/8 years of age. He had by then changed his name to his current name and identified himself as male.

He felt comfortable. Comfortable and calm and happy with himself as a male.

The nightmares began when he learned he might not be able to receive gender affirming care. He had nightmares of blood filled rooms. Blood coming from his own body. These nightmares were ongoing. For years. He became a stressed and sad little boy. No child should have to suffer like this. It's UNNECESSARY.

Do you know when his nightmares stopped, be cause they did? When he was approved for gender affirming care. Hormone blockers. He has not had one nightmare since.

No child should be condemned or denied healthcare of ANY kind.
If this is passed, children will suffer, children will die. The blood will be on your hands. Do not make children suffer for the ignorance of the uneducated.

Thank you
Kathy Kuehn

Edgerton WI
53534

Good morning, Members of the Senate Committee on Colleges and Universities, Senator Cabral-Guevera, Senator Testin, Senator Feizkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, and Senator Carpenter,

I, Abby Frank Taylor, am a registered voter/neighbor/community member in District 6. I grew up in Madison and recently moved back a year and a half ago.

As a member of this community, **I urge you to vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480** as they are likely to cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin. As a step-sister to a trans teen, I know how critical access to this life saving care is, and how much of a difference being trusted and supported to take these necessary steps for your wellbeing and safety can make.

I know you share in my care for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you **OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480 today**. You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Abby Frank Taylor
Madison, WI
53704

October 11, 2023

Dear Senators Cabral-Guevara, Testin, and the rest of the Senate Committee on Health members,

As a public health epidemiologist with over a decade of experience in promoting equitable access to health I am writing to urge you to stand with the majority of Wisconsinites and **oppose Senate Bills 479 and 480** which aim to prevent Wisconsin youth from accessing gender affirming care.

These bills are part of a larger movement designed to promote the genocide of trans and gender diverse people within the United States. Gender-affirming care is a critical component of ensuring the health and well-being of transgender and gender-diverse youth, and it plays a crucial role in fostering an inclusive and supportive society.

Access to gender-affirming care, including counseling, hormone therapy, and other medical interventions, is proven to be an effective means of alleviating the distress associated with gender dysphoria. Numerous studies have shown that when transgender youth receive appropriate care, their mental health outcomes significantly improve, leading to a better overall quality of life.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I trust that you will make decisions that prioritize the health and rights of transgender and gender-diverse youth and the medical providers that support them by **opposing SB 479 and SB 480**.

Sincerely,

Emile Gunovich, MPH
Madison, WI 53711

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Erica Richmond, and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 25 years and have been fortunate enough to work and raise a family here.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because I believe that these are private decisions, to be made only between patients and their families in consultation with physicians and other experts.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Erica Kesin Richmond

Madison, WI 53705

To the committee:

My name is Lena Sutter and I live in Eau Claire County. In fact, I just purchased my first home in Wisconsin and hope to spend a long, happy life here - but in the event that bills like SB479, SB480 and the other anti-trans and anti-healthcare legislation that has come before the committee, I do not know that I will feel safe raising a family in the state of Wisconsin. I am not trans, nor is my partner, but we love people who are trans, and if our children are trans we will love them unconditionally. Part of that unconditional love will be making sure they are in a state where they can access the healthcare that they need. Simply put - particularly if SB480 passes- I will not raise my children in this state because I need them to be safe. I need them to be cared for not only by me, but by the systems that we have put in place to protect them. It has been said time and time again - This does not protect our children, it harms them. It harms children. Read that again. This bill harms children. That's what the science says, and that's what I believe. For the future of our great state, you must oppose SB479 and SB480. Thank you.

-Lena Sutter

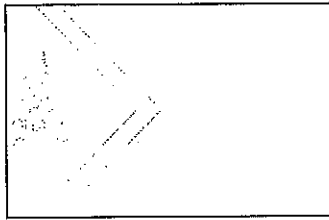
Dear WI State Senate:

I have been a mental health provider for 20 years and licensed in my home State of Wisconsin since 2011. I am also an LGBTQ person who grew up in Appleton, Wisconsin, with NO LGBTQ Affirming Care. The consequences of having no support as a young LGBTQ person were devastating enough that I left the state in 1993 and did not return until 2007. In my current practice as a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, the majority of my patient population is LGBTQ identified. I also provide LGBTQ Affirming Care Training for all healthcare employees at my company. I am extremely well versed in the health disparities facing my community and the social determinants of health that cause these disparities, like suicidality, homelessness, depression and anxiety, substance use and abuse, among others. Affirming Care is THE ideal treatment for these health disparities for LGBTQ youth and adults and it WORKS. My practice is thriving and contributes to my company's overall success in the healthcare market here in Wisconsin.

Affirming Care is a worldwide ETHICAL standard of care for our LGBTQ community, based on peer reviewed research which recommends safe and effective medical and mental health interventions and the REMOVAL of barriers to accessing ethical care. What you are proposing is INCREASING BARRIERS to ethical treatment. The impact of this will be deadly. It will also be costly. Should Wisconsin lose its ability to practice Affirming Care, you will see increased hospitalizations, increased disabilities, increased homelessness, and increased mental health burden on those already burdened by discrimination, lack of support from their own families and communities, and employers. These measures would drive qualified professionals OUT of Wisconsin during a time when Wisconsin faces major shortages in health care workers. LGBTQ individuals, couples and families are growing in numbers, not lessening. Passing any legislation that places barriers in the way of healthcare will devastate the healthcare system for future generations. Not only is this proposed legislation morally and ethically deplorable, it is also the very oppressive, hateful, discriminatory practice that causes the need for Affirming Care to begin with. You cannot erase us. We have and will always exist, and we vote. You do not represent the best interests of Wisconsin if you support this oppressive legislation. Please do what is your legal and ethical obligation to fight discrimination, not legalize it.

Thank you.

Kathleen Schiltz, MS, LMFT
She/They
Behavioral Care Clinician



October 12, 2023

Esteemed Committee Members:

As co-leaders of the Grace Church Pride Committee, we are writing on behalf of the congregation of Grace Episcopal Church in Madison, Wisconsin. As an inclusive Faith Community, we oppose **Senate Bill 479** - Criminalization of Doctors who provide gender affirming care and **Senate Bill 480** – Gender Affirming Care Ban for minors in Wisconsin.

Members of the LGBTQ+ community have the same rights, privileges, and responsibilities as any other members of society. This also includes our youth, under the guidance of their medical providers and parents/guardians. In particular, young people need nurturing and support as they grow in their authentic identities into the people they are meant to be. Education, not hateful legislation is the best way to inform those who are uncertain about how to engage with people who are different from themselves.

Governor Evers has already pledged to veto any bills limiting the rights of the LGBTQ+ community. However, we know his veto won't reduce the harm caused by this needless and cynical legislation. The Trevor Project's 2023 Youth Mental Health Survey found that nearly 1 in 3 LGBTQ+ young people said their mental health was poor "most of the time or always," due to anti-LGBTQ+ policies and legislation.

We believe that Christ calls us to embody an inclusive community of differing views and perspectives, united by our shared experience of Christ's love and our coming together as one body in the Eucharistic feast. By modeling that inclusion, we may be a witness of God's love and God's beloved community in our deeply divided culture.

Again, we ask you to **oppose Senate Bills 479 and 480**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Shelley & Olwen Hansen-Blake,

Co-Leaders, Grace Church Pride Committee

Grace Episcopal Church

116 W. Washington Ave.

Madison, WI 53703



I believe it is irresponsible not to provide health care for children who need it, and gender-affirming health care is no different than cancer care or a cochlear implant or any other health care. In fact, the lack of gender-affirming health care can be life threatening for young people. I have a friend whose child attempted suicide on multiple occasions before they determined that they suffered from gender dysphoria. At that point, the child was put onto puberty blockers until they were old enough to begin transitioning from female (the gender identified at birth) to male. My friend says the decision for her was simple: she could either have a dead daughter or a live son. Far too many young transgender people choose suicide because they cannot live without gender-affirming health care.

I honestly cannot understand why members of our legislature find appropriate health care for children to be so frightening. There seems to be a notion that the way you are born has to be the way that you live. I have heard it said, "God doesn't make mistakes." In that case, a baby born with a hole in her heart should not have surgery. A child with a club foot should not have it rectified. A deaf child should not be allowed a cochlear implant. No child should have braces or wear glasses. It just doesn't make sense.

Please protect our young people. Allow them to have the health care they need in order to survive and thrive in this state.

Casey Garhart

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Deanna Blanchard and I am a resident of Oregon, WI. I've lived in Wisconsin for 42 years and am an RN recently retired from teaching at UW-Madison School of Nursing. I am married with 3 adult children. My youngest child is non-binary. They have known since their childhood years that they didn't feel as if they fit with the girls group or the boys group. They enjoyed things that both genders enjoyed. They were a soccer goalie and gravitated towards plain t-shirts, jeans and a baseball cap. They enjoyed playing with dolls, playing games, and reading books with their sisters and girlfriends. They played football in the back yard with boy neighbors. During adolescence they thought they were lesbian and had several long term relationships. In their late 20s after a relationship ended they were diagnosed with severe depression. At one point they took an overdose and spent months in a rehab facility. Finally after much therapy and soul-searching they decided non-binary fit them best. They felt strongly that having top surgery (bilateral mastectomy) would be important to helping them feel their body and mind were in sync. After many months of preparation and approval they had the surgery which has been life-saving. That plus the gender-affirming and mental health treatment they continue to have.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because they completely deny life saving care to a population of youth and adults who desperately need it and I feel that is discriminatory. What these citizens and their families need is hope. These bills completely take hope away.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Deanna Blanchard

Oregon, WI. 53575

Dear members of the senate committee on health,

My name is Tierney Marto and I am a resident of Menomonee Falls. I have lived in Wisconsin my whole life (36 years).

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on senate bills 479 & 480. As a Wisconsin resident I am opposed to these bills because I have friends and loved ones that this bill would directly affect. I also don't want my child to grow up in a world where they or their friends can't be supported to be who they want to be. That should be left up to the families to decide.

If passed these bills would cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with discrimination & harassment we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal and/or private decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,
Tierney Marto
Menomonee Falls, 53051

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Vanessa Meinke, and I am a resident of Windsor. I have lived in Wisconsin for my entire 41 years of life. I am a proud Madison business owner, a military spouse, a mother to 3 children: 2 incredibly dynamic, brilliant, wonderful teenagers and a child who passed due to medical complexity a few years back.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bill 480. As a proud Wisconsin resident, I am opposed to this bill because gender affirming care saves lives and this bill prohibits the gender transition and medical intervention for individuals under 18 years of age. The fact of the matter is that science and the medical community at large do not support this restriction at all. Evidence based practices support the use of an interdisciplinary team to support transgender youth in their transition. Access to these services is critical to families and transgender youth. I believe that body autonomy is a basic fundamental right for all including those who are transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming. As a grieving mother I implore you to do what is right, to not get caught up in a culture war for political gain. The fear of losing another child consumes me. The fear of losing a child due to lack of access to basic, evidence-based care is outrageous and simply unacceptable.

Make no mistake about it this bill will be life threatening to our transgender youth. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Meinke

Windsor, 53590

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Julie Reuss, and I am a resident of Waukesha. I've lived in Wisconsin for 33 years and I have a transgender daughter who grew up here. I am also the president of PFLAG Waukesha, a support group for allies of LGBTQIA+ people. Our mission is to help create communities where our loved ones can live free from harm, discrimination, or abuse just because of who they are or who they love.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because I strongly believe in parental rights and these bills not only take away the right for parents to provide the best possible care for their transgender children, it also terrorizes medical professionals into not even considering providing appropriate "talk therapy" for fear of being sued. I was at the Assembly hearings last week and the amount of people who are against this type of legislation is staggering. Because the Assembly bills passed out of committee, it shows that Republicans have no heart for families with minor transgender children. It's a shameful play for getting votes for re-election that I hope backfires.

If passed, these bills will cost lives greatly reduce the ability of transgender youth to become fully functioning members of society. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Thank you for listening to me,

Julie Reuss

she/her/hers

President

PFLAG Waukesha

Hello, my name is Jess Draws and I live in the Tenney-Lapham neighborhood in Madison, Wisconsin. I have a Master's of Social Work degree and many of my friends and family are trans. I oppose SB 479 and 480. SB 479 seeks to vilify trans communities and intimidate the doctors who serve them, which undermines their human rights and dignity. I firmly believe that if legislature were to pass SB 480 it would result in increased deaths by suicide for Wisconsin youth. Gender affirming care has been proven time and again to be life saving, and this is backed up by state and national level medical and mental health organizations. We cannot let these bills inspired by misplaced concern and hatred towards the trans community to pass.

Thank you,
Jess Draws
Madison WI 53704

Good morning Members of the Senate Committee on Health, Senator Cabral-Guevara, Senator Testin, Senator Felzkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, Senator Carpenter,

I, Dana Mattingly, am a registered voter in Appleton, WI. I have lived here for 10 years as a mother and active community member. I urge you to vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480 because these bills will have several negative effects.

- They will cost lives. Gender affirming care is recommended by all mainstream medical communities. It saves lives and improves the lives of the individuals who need it.
- They will make it more difficult for families to access medical care. It is already hard enough for families to get the care they need for their children. These bills will increase the burden for families of transgender individuals.
- They will cause medical providers to leave our state. Wisconsin cannot afford to lose our medical providers to surrounding states that do not make it criminal for them to practice medicine in alignment with their training and ethics.

I know you share in my care for the well-being of all children in Wisconsin and will do the right thing representing us when you OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480. We can all agree that politicians should not interfere with personal, private, medical decisions that should be made between patients, their doctors and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dana Mattingly
54913

To the Senate Committee on Health:

Related to Bill 479 and 480

In response to those who defend these bills:

For those who defend these bills on religious grounds, if you believe in God, why are you questioning His will in creating transgender children?

For those who list possible side effects, have you not opened up the flier that comes with even the most seemingly benign medication and read the potential risks?

For those who believe these decisions are made lightly and without enough controls, have you ever read about the process for transition?

For those who wish to hold the medical field and everyone else to your own personal beliefs, there is a reason why medical decisions are not based on a community vote. I may not agree with your quality of life, end of life, or surgical decisions, but there is a reason I do not get a vote.

For those of you who feel you can love these children more than their own parents, and more than they love themselves, you are wrong, you do not.

For those of you that would tie the hands of a caring physician by preventing the care that would save the life of a child. Think again.

For those of you that feel it is ok for legislators to insert themselves into personal health care decisions: one of the basic premises of good health care is to allow all decisions to be made by the patient, the provider, and in the case of children, the parents. No one else should be in the room. No one.

These laws are harmful to children, to families, and ultimately to our community. I do not support SB 479 or 480.

Jeanne Rickert
Madison, WI

To whom it may concern,

This testimony is in opposition to bill SB 480. The proposed bill does not align with international standards of care, research, or clinical expertise. All kids deserve to thrive; all kids deserve access to the health care they need to live their healthiest, happiest and most fulfilled lives. At its root, gender-affirming care is listening to, understanding, and supporting transgender/nonbinary young people and their families. This includes both mental health care and medical care. Gender affirming care is health care. It is specialized care provided by teams with training and expertise in evidence-based care, just like any other pediatric specialty provided to children.

Gender-affirming care is age-appropriate and provided with parental consent. There are countless families nervous and scared knowing that their child's life, and their family's future, depends on the outcome of SB 480. We know that gender affirming care is lifesaving. Trans and nonbinary people suffer disproportionately from suicidality and other mental health issues. According to a survey by the Trevor Project of over 40,000 LGBTQ+ youth ages 13 to 24, over 60% of trans and nonbinary youth reported engaging in self-harm and 52% had seriously considered suicide in the past year- which is far above national averages. The care medical professionals provide and the process they follow with each family is backed by every major medical and mental health organization in this country and the world. We call upon lawmakers to introduce legislation to promote the health, well-being, and safety of transgender and gender-diverse youth.

Emily J. Peterson, MS, LPC

(she/her/hers)

Licensed Professional Counselor

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Karen Polnitz, and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 1 year but have been a visitor and family member of Wisconsin residents for my whole life. I submit my testimony to you today as the proud mother of a beautifully gender expansive child and the friend and former teacher of many gender expansive people.

Thank you for taking the time to hear our voices today.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because their very introduction threatens the wellbeing of trans, nonbinary, and gender expansive individuals in our community. These bills threaten the security of lifesaving medical care that can change someone's very ability to exist. We know that without access to gender affirming care, mental health struggles abound and the lives of our children and loved ones will be at risk.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families. Please vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480.

Thank you for your time and for putting care and compassion at the center of your actions today.

Sincerely,

Karen Polnitz
Madison, WI 53704

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Kristin Ellis, and I am a resident of McFarland WI. I've lived in Wisconsin for about 20 years and am a small business owner. I would have loved to attend this session, but the short notice made it impossible for me to come. My wife and I have been married since 2010 and we have two children ages 7 and 5. Our son, Trevor, lost his battle with mental health on June 26, 2020.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because the government has no place interfering with private medical decisions.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. No parent should have to bury a child. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin. If these bills should pass, my family will start looking into relocating out of the state. I imagine other families will also leave as if you pass this bill, you are making our community feel less safe than we already do.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Kristin Ellis
Owner Farwell Gallery

Village of McFarland
53558

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Jo Haberman and I am a resident of Maiden Rock.

I am taking time away from celebrating our 36th anniversary with my spouse, Jane, today in order to write to you because we feel extremely deeply about Senate Bill 480. .

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bill 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to this bill because, as a proud and lifelong member of the LGBTQ community, I have witnessed the toll on young people who are targeted by malicious politicians and policies contrary to their survival and flourishing.

If passed, this bill will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

Politicians should not interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,
Jo Haberman

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Janet Wenger and I am a resident of Prairie du Sac. I am a life-long resident of Wisconsin.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because it denies medical care necessary for the health and wellness of minors seeking to live their own identity. I have a trans grandson who has greatly benefited from being able to transition at age 16. He is now much happier and self confident. Before his transition, he felt depressed and that life was too difficult.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families. Please vote NO on SN 479 and 480!

Sincerely,
Janet Wenger
Prairie du Sac , 53578

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Chelsea Chase and I was born and raised in Wisconsin. I was born at Luther Hospital in Eau Claire and received pediatric care from birth through puberty and adolescence, and well on into my adulthood. I went to Eau Claire and Menomonie area schools from preschool until I graduated from Menomonie High School. I attended Chippewa Valley Technical College, and Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College studying developmental psychology as well as early childhood education and development. I worked in many capacities in Wisconsin from adolescence to adulthood, including providing care to young children in established daycare settings and Headstart classrooms.

I am writing as a concerned former resident of Wisconsin and active Wisconsin community member to express my strong opposition to Senate Bills SB479 and SB480, currently under consideration. These bills pose significant threats to the well-being of our state's children and the healthcare professionals dedicated to their care.

SB479, which would subject doctors providing gender-affirming care to criminal charges for providing necessary healthcare is alarming. WPATH and SOC8 have decidedly enshrined gender affirming treatments as the best standards of practice when working with adolescents who are dealing with gender incongruence.

Equally troubling is SB480, which aims to ban all forms of gender-affirming care for minors in Wisconsin. It's crucial to recognize that the ONLY methods of gender-affirming care for children are nonmedical interventions. Additionally, adolescents, with parental consent, may require puberty blockers—a vital aspect of gender-affirming care that allows individuals time to make informed decisions about their well-being. Types of care often included in gender-affirming care legislation and policy also result in restriction or removal of critical care needed for intersex children, adolescents, and adults—who make up 2% of the population, just as numerous as redheads or persons with green eyes. The impacts of these types of bans are grossly overreaching and infringe upon the rights of many populations including people not specified (read: targeted) by the legislation.

Denying gender-affirming care to children and adolescents has severe consequences. Research consistently shows that individuals who are denied access to gender-affirming care are at higher risk of suicide attempts. By passing these bills, we risk exacerbating the mental health crisis among Wisconsin's youth.

These bills are not just misguided; they are irresponsible, unethical, immoral, and harmful. They jeopardize the well-being and futures of Wisconsin's children. Additionally, they infringe upon the parental rights of Wisconsin adults seeking care for their children. Restricting parental agency in healthcare decisions for their children is a concerning overreach that hinders families from making informed choices about the care their children need.

It is important to note that similar bills in other states, restricting either the right to seek or to provide adequate gender-affirming care (or both), have resulted in an exodus of qualified physicians across many fields, including pediatrics, OB/GYN, endocrinology, surgeons, and more. Wisconsin cannot afford to lose skilled and compassionate healthcare professionals who play a crucial role in the well-being of our community. I urge you to consider the long-term consequences of these bills on the health and future of Wisconsin's youth and adults alike.

Instead of restricting access to gender-affirming care, we should be working towards legislation that ensures equal access to adequate healthcare for all residents, including protective measures for our state's physicians. I implore you to reject SB479 and SB480 and actively support legislation that protects our children's health and preserves the ability of healthcare professionals to provide necessary care without fear of legal consequences.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. I beseech you to make decisions that better prioritize the well-being of Wisconsin's residents.

Sincerely,

Chelsea Chase
Minneapolis, MN 55406
Formerly of Menomonie WI & a graduate of Menomonie High School / Menomonie Area School District

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Wren, and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 15 years and my family has lived in Wisconsin for a long time, and I plan on living here for the rest of my life. I plan on going to college, and working at a job that also gives enough personal time to create art and be a voice in some way that helps people. In a community I believe it is important to have meaningful connections to the people around you, and to support those who need it.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because everyone deserves a chance to connect with their community, to feel safe presenting themselves the way that they feel is fit, receive healthcare that they know will be beneficial to them, and medical professionals should be able to give medical treatment regardless of any politics or outsider opinions. America is supposed to be the land of the free, restricting personal and medical decisions of others based on your feelings will lead to a country of control and hatred. Even if you ignore the lives that will be lost, Any community we have will be destroyed. I am lucky to have the opportunities I do have. While I am not trans I know people who are, they have been the most lovely people I have met, most have been under 18, medical transition helped those who received it significantly, although most have not gone through it and not all want it, some people have thought it was the right choice for them. One person is one of the kindest boys I have met, he is a senior in high school but knows a lot about life, and mental health, he is such a kind person and without the medical treatment he received i'm not sure if i would have ever met him. Because he may have died without it. I know many people who already can't medically transition although they need to, and they are in pain, I am scared for them. While being trans itself is not a health issue, dysphoria is. Not all trans people experience dysphoria but for those that do, many times medical transition is truly their best option. This is not only Wisconsin but America, a place where we should be free to make personal choices. Medical transition is one of them. Giving people the opportunity to sue doctors over giving medical treatment would be inhumane and disgusting. What harm are you afraid of that isn't preventable even with medical transition? Why would you be okay with this bill passing? I personally think if you approve this bill it shows how selfish you truly are. I would not be surprised if this bill passed. Because while I and most other Wisconsinites want what's best for the people, I don't trust that you do.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Wren

Madison

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Dylan Gee, and I am a resident of Black Earth. I've lived in Wisconsin for almost 22 years and love so many things about our state. Our parks, our towns, and the people are all so interesting.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because they would actively harm not only my friends, but some of my own family members. I am always told by people I know how scary it has been for them for the last few years, and I do not want to see them go through any worse than they already have had.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Dylan Gee

Black Earth, WI 53515

October 12, 2023

Testimony of Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice re: Ban on Gender-Affirming Medical Care and Penalizing Doctors

Re: SB 480, SB 479

To: Senate Committee on Health

Contact: Rabbi Bonnie Margulis, Executive Director, Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice,
; 608-513-7121, Madison, WI 53719

I am Rabbi Bonnie Margulis, Executive Director of Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice. We are a statewide, non-partisan, interfaith organization dedicated to promoting social justice in Wisconsin. I am here today to speak out against any and all legislation that harms members of the LGBTQ+ community, especially young people in that community. And make no mistake, legislation that seeks to bar youth from gender-affirming medical care and threatens doctors who provide such care does grave harm.

Gender-affirming care is life-saving medical care. It is supported by nearly every major American medical association, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association, and many others. Legislators who have no medical training should not be in the position of substituting their judgement for that of medical and mental health experts. Nor should they be substituting their judgement for that of parents who want to support and affirm their children's gender identity.

Threatening doctors with lawsuits for providing this care will have a chilling effect on Wisconsin doctors. It sends a signal both to the transgender community and to doctors who just want to do what is best for their patients that Wisconsin is not the place to live or to practice. These bills will do irreparable harm to the Wisconsin LGBTQ+ community, medical community, and to our state. Even considering these bills is already doing harm and causing trauma for the LGBTQ+ community.

Depression, anxiety, and suicidality are at a crisis level in the LGBTQ+ community. According to the Trevor Project's 2020 National Youth Survey on LGBTQ mental health, 40% of LGBTQ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the previous 12 months, with more than half of trans and nonbinary youth having considered it. By contrast, transgender youth whose families support their gender identity have a 52% decrease in suicidal thoughts, a 48% decrease in suicide attempts and a significant increase in self-esteem and general health.

The members of Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice come from many different faith traditions. We are Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Baha'i, Wiccan, Hindu, Quaker, Unitarian, and others. We have different beliefs and practices. But all our faiths teach the same basic value that honors the worth and dignity of every human being and the imperative above all else to love others as we love ourselves and to do no harm. We call upon our legislature to refrain from doing harm to the trans community and to vote against this dangerous legislation.

Dear members Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Chris Heizer, and I am a resident of Eau Claire. I've lived in Wisconsin my entire life, 30 years and I am proudly LGBTQ and Autistic.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to Senate Bills 479 and 480. I condemn these attacks in the strongest possible terms, because transgender and non-binary youth are kids just like any other youth, and they deserve equal access to healthcare. All gender affirming care is age appropriate and backed by every major medical organization. These kids know who they are, and while my lived experience differs from theirs, I can tell you with every fiber of my being that no one knows who each of us are inside better than ourselves.

Trying to control who can access healthcare and attacking doctors for providing it are reckless actions that will only endanger our youth. Doctors are expertly trained to provide gender affirming care, just like any other care a doctor may specialize in. If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe, welcomed and loved for who they are in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors and families, and recent statistics show that the vast majority of the public agrees with this. Please seek out accurate resources, such as <https://www.hrc.org/resources/get-the-facts-on-gender-affirming-care> to be properly informed, and stand on the right side of history.

Sincerely,
Chris Heizer
Eau Claire, WI 54703

October 12, 2023

Testimony on SB 479 and SB 480

FORGE has been serving Wisconsin trans and nonbinary individuals since our founding in 1994. We began our support group for parents of trans children and youth in 2015. Since then, we have worked with more than 100 Wisconsin families, with children ranging in age from 3 to well into their 30s. Some families came to us when their children were in their early teens, and have stayed with us until those “children” are in college or beyond. Others have been with us only long enough to get answers or referrals for their immediate needs of supporting their children, and then they moved on.

Every single one of the trans children told their parents about their gender, sometimes long before they were enrolled in school. In other words, it is a complete myth that children “learn to be trans” from parents or schoolmates. Gender identity is innate. Children just know what their gender feels like and who they are. (This is true for both trans kids and non-trans kids.)

When young children explain to their parents that they are not the gender they were assigned at birth, parents (and schools, if appropriate) can adopt the child’s name and pronouns (if they want different ones), cut and style the child’s hair as the child wants, and obtain a wardrobe that fits the child’s identity. That’s it. That’s a young child’s “transition.” If a child transitions before they start school, or if the family changes the school the child goes to, their trans status may not be known to schoolmates or even school officials; I know of several such cases. Parents also begin to find the knowledgeable physicians, therapists, and support groups the family will need for ongoing resources, problem-solving, and support.

Once the trans child nears puberty, the physician(s) and therapist(s) who have been working with the parents and child discuss together what options the child has to affirm their gender and address their hopes and fears. Many trans children do *not* want to go through their coming puberty because it will cause body changes they desperately do *not* want (ex: breasts, facial hair, a deepened voice). Ironically, if a trans child is forced to go through the wrong puberty, they will almost certainly need surgery as an adult to attempt to reverse the changes resulting from that puberty. Taking away puberty blockers therefore actually *creates* the need for more surgeries later on. More critically, for youth who have strong body dysphoria, forcing them to go through the wrong puberty is deeply destructive to their mental health and overall well-being. Puberty-blockers also buy more time for the child and family, time that can help them demonstrate to others that the child’s identity is not a “phase.”

It’s only in their mid- to late-teens – when everyone is certain of the child’s gender identity -- that trans youth may be offered hormones. These will start the puberty that aligns with the youth’s identity. Surgery is almost never performed on minors.

I have walked you through the usual path trans children and their parents take in order to counter some of the outrageous lies that have been told around legislation like **Senate Bills 479 and 480**. These bills are deeply, deeply harmful and mean-spirited to children who simply don’t feel like the gender they were expected to be. They are guaranteed to produce great distress, mental health problems, and possibly suicide in trans children forced to live as someone they are not. Please do not inflict that harm on Wisconsin’s families with trans children.

Loree Cook-Daniels
Policy and Program Director

I understand that recently, the “Help Not Harm Act” (LRB-0191/LRB-4459) was introduced in the state legislature by republican leadership.

It appears this is a “group think” action for republicans nationwide to either intentionally or unintentionally harm our transgender youth. This fear of “if they’re not like us, they must be wrong” does not provide equal rights under the law.

Contrary to what some believe, being transgender is not a choice nor a whim or have any religious implications. It’s who these people are and how they were born. And, there is no minimum age where young folks know who they are. All they’re trying to do is live their best lives openly and honestly. To deny and eradicate their existence is akin to horrors of the Nazi tenants.

Before you take a position on this bill, please do the following:

1. Talk to a transgender young person and their parents. Hear first-hand the importance of having lifesaving mental/medical care available in Wisconsin. (As a parent of an adult transgender woman, I’m available to talk with you 920-819-4999).
2. Study the Trevor Project’s 2022 Youth Mental Health Survey which found that more than 56% of trans and non-binary youth in Wisconsin have seriously considered suicide in the past year, while more than 21% of them have attempted it!
3. According to the Wisconsin Office of Children’s Mental Health survey report (June 2021), LGBT youth experience higher rates of mental health disorders in general and have almost twice the rate of death by suicide compared to cis gender youth. Additionally, one study found that more than two-thirds of youth in the LGBT community experienced anxiety symptoms in the two weeks prior to their being surveyed.
4. Be aware that at least 74% of LGBTQ+ youth in Wisconsin have experienced discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.
5. Know that transgender young people are afraid to be who they really are due to the stigma associated with being transgender. And at least 35% of LGBTQ+ youth in our state have been threatened or harmed because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
6. Know that untreated mental/physical health of transgender youth has a strong negative impact on their ability to effectively learn.
7. How would you respond if a loved one or someone you know is or has a transgender youth? Would you deny them important potential lifesaving care?
8. Understand that passing this “Help Not Harm” legislation is a misnomer as it doesn’t help and will harm the transgender youth of Wisconsin.

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Peggy Maertz, and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 59 years. My husband and our two children have also lived in the state their entire lives.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because they are wrong in every way possible. These bills are blatantly discriminatory, hateful, and an infringement on individual rights. Specifically targeting children is immoral. Requiring the posting notices in the medical providers offices is offensive and a violation of the medical oath and infringes on HIPPA. By this rule you should then need to require postings for other medical procedures, i.e., tubal ligation, vasectomies, breast enhancements, breast reductions, mastectomies for cancer, liposuction, tummy tucks, ect. and the list goes on. How is it that a person's right not to wear masks during COVID, not get vaccinated or get their children vaccinated is supported, but you want to infringe on the rights of LGBTQ+ youth bodies and medical care because you don't agree with it?

My daughter's best friend since kindergarten struggled with gender identity for many years. They went through all the requirements and more than a year of counseling prior to making the decision to start transitioning. It wasn't a spur of the moment decision and they weren't "groomed" or influenced in anyway. Luckily, they had the support and acceptance of family and friends.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Peggy Maertz
Madison, WI 53704

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Suzanne Bassette, and I am a resident of La Crosse. I've lived in Wisconsin for over 45 years and for the most part, have always been proud to call this my home. But now, I worry.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because gender affirming care saves lives.

As the mother to a trans child, I can tell you that the gender affirming care they have received from Gunderson Lutheran in La Crosse has been focused on counseling, reading, learning, and self awareness. It's never just a prescription and out the door you go, nor is it permanent body altering surgery as a minor. It is a comprehensive program meant to assist children and their families with constructing a plan to keep the child mentally and physically well, socially engaged, and academically succeeding, while understanding how they perceive themselves through a gender lens.

In our case: **IT SAVED MY CHILD'S LIFE.** I hadn't realized that my child had been experiencing suicidal ideation since age 8. I just knew they seemed depressed and we sought counseling. Things did not improve.

Why? Because they were holding onto a gigantic secret and they were terrified to admit it. It was only after an attempt to endanger their life at age 11 (not a suicide attempt, but an incident where they purposely put themselves in danger), that they fearfully came out to me.

We sought advice from trusted friends, then made an appointment for gender affirming care. I learned as much as I could, because I **NEEDED** to understand. I found that gender affirming care is an option for anyone questioning their gender. No one forces anything; there's no agenda. So much happens in these appointments before anyone even brings up puberty blocking medication. Counseling alongside my child and by themselves. Assessments. Discussions about familial relationships, friendships, social media, and expectations. Learning about how gender is different than sex and how over time it can change. Clothing and hairstyle options. Learning about roles and stereotypes that previously felt forced or uncomfortable and how to dismantle the systems that require gender assignment to those roles.

By the time the subject of puberty blocking medication came up (probably 4 appointments in), it seemed almost an afterthought, because my child was already finding clarification in their journey and had been learning enough to say that they weren't interested in holding off puberty. Through this process, my child has discovered a lot about themselves and decided they did not want any kind of medical intervention for their body at this time. While my child knows it is an option, they've found affirmation through counseling, a strong network of support, and the current availability and accessibility of resources.

The ability for my child to be heard, to be believed, to be empowered, and **to be affirmed** changed their life. Six years later, they are happy and thriving, with support and accessibility to care should they need it in the future. Most importantly, I still have my child; they are alive.

Keeping medical care available will keep these children alive and thriving. It will keep them learning and engaging with their families, friends, schools, and communities. They will find their sense of self and have support and understanding. This is truly what medical care...quality medical care should do for all of us.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Suzanne K Bassette

La Crosse, 54603

October 11th, 2023

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Adam Johnson, and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 6 years.

I am writing to urge you to vote no on Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480.

Based on actions that other states have taken to take away trans people's rights, we know that these bills only serve as a stepping stone for banning trans healthcare altogether, which is in direct opposition to scientific literature and the most recent WPATH standards of care.

These bills are not based on science and sense, but fear and prejudice. Numerous peer reviewed studies have shown the life-saving effects of trans healthcare. All these bills will do is isolate and harm a vulnerable community.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,
Adam Johnson

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Achilles Robinson. I am a resident of the city of Milwaukee and I am writing in opposition of SB 479 and SB 480.

I am a 23 year old transgender man and 3 weeks ago I received a gender affirming surgery. This surgery saved my life and is giving me the opportunity to live a full and happy life despite what many want. The practices of the hospital/staff were incredible. There was absolutely no malpractice or any sort, and the steps the team took to make me feel comfortable and cared for were outstanding. It took many hoops to jump through to finally get this surgery. There were seemingly endless forms to fill out, many therapy appointments as well as doctor's appointments, and a great deal of informed consent checks. I worked so hard to be able to finally receive my surgery and so has every other trans person who has received a surgery. And like the rest of the 99% of transgender people who have received a gender affirming surgery, I am finally happy. No doctor should be sued for simply doing their job correctly and doing as a patient asks and consents to. There is a reason we sign informed consent forms and go through all the therapy and doctor's visits. We wouldn't go through that for nothing. For these reasons I am in opposition of SB 479.

Banning "all forms" of gender affirming care for minors simply does not make sense. For the fact that, most of the gender affirming care for minors is things like haircuts, change of clothes, going by a new name, puberty blockers (which cisgender children are prescribed regularly) and in rarer cases HRT (hormone replacement therapy). But even that comes with therapy, a psychologist's letter confirming that HRT is the right path for the person, and parental consent, that doesn't happen until the ages of 15, 16, or 17. Banning "all forms" of gender affirming care for minors doesn't make sense on an enforcement standpoint. How does one expect to enforce the banning of things like haircuts, different clothes, and calling a youth by a name they prefer? There is no real way to enforce this without extreme measures that would resemble a dystopian novel. And if somehow we were to enforce the banning of all gender affirming care for minors, these minors would kill themselves. Kids would kill themselves. Stripping someone of something as baseline as their identity is inhumane and will cause a spike in childhood mental illness and childhood suicide. Not wanting transgender people to exist is no excuse for sentencing transgender children to death. This is not about parents forcing being trans onto children. This is about the youth finally being brave enough, safe enough, and educated enough to know when they are trans and to come out and be it. If you strip away the rights of these minors their blood will be on your hands.

The fact that my community's existence is a political battle right now is sickening. We are people and we deserve healthcare just like everyone else. We are just people, like everyone else.

Please oppose these bills.

Achilles Robinson

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Francine Hartman and I am a resident of Madison for the past 37 years and have been proud to be part of a progressive, caring community. My husband and I have two adult children. We also have many MANY friends in Wisconsin and in other states who have members of their family who are transgender. I can state that in 100% of the cases of transgender people, they are all happy and productive now that they can live in their preferred gender or nonbinary status. Being forced to conform to others' expectations can lead to serious self-harm or death.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because first of all, it is not the business of the Senate or any other governmental agency to decide who can live, happily, in their own bodies. It is not the business of any part of government to make personal health decisions for people, other than in physically dangerous situations (such as prosecuting domestic battery or harassment). Second, these bills will only serve to complicate much-needed care and to discourage physicians or therapists from helping people who are just trying to live as individuals, in the way that fits for their bodies and spirits.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin. The proposed legislation is unnecessary and, in fact, harmful.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Francine Hartman
606 Schiller Ct
Madison WI 53704

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Gideon Elliott, and I am a resident of Madison, WI. I've lived in Wisconsin for about 5 years and have been visiting the state since I was a teenager.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because all evidence points to the harm that they will cause for trans youth. There are dozens of respected health organizations, national and worldwide, who have advocated again and again for trans youth to have the autonomy to choose the expression of their identities, gender or otherwise. The statistics on suicide and suicide attempts in the trans population could not be clearer.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Gideon C. Elliott

Madison, WI

10/11/2023

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Elizabeth Wetzel Gracyalny, and I am a resident of Green Bay. I've lived in Wisconsin for 36 years, and I am a proud parent of two amazing children, as well as a high school social worker and GSA club advisor in the Green Bay Area Public School District.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, high school educator, and a mother, I am vehemently opposed to these bills because gender affirming care is suicide prevention at its core. To take away this lifeline from some of our most vulnerable youth will undoubtedly cause rates of self-harm, suicide attempts, and deaths by suicide to increase among them.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQIA+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Wetzel Gracyalny

Green Bay, 54303

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Susan Blake , and I am a resident of Stoughton, WI. I've lived in Wisconsin for 30 years and I have a step child who is transgender.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because gender affirming care is essential to the wellbeing of transgendered children.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,
Susan Blake
Stoughton, WI 53589

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Natalie Bartel, and I am a resident of Mazomanie, WI. I've lived in Wisconsin for my whole life and would love to keep living here.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because they are dangerous, outdated, and I have so many close friends and family that are transgender.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Natalie Bartel

Mazomanie, WI 53560

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Francesca, and I am a resident of Neosho, WI (Dodge County). I've lived in Wisconsin for a long time and am a UW-Madison alumna.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because they are a gross violation of personal privacy and freedom, and an example of egregious government overreach. We should be supporting and uplifting trans kids and letting them have their freedom to express and affirm their gender identity and participate in the activities they want to do. The government should NOT be involved in personal medical decisions of these kids and their families. You are not protecting them with these bills, you are harming them and demonizing them. Your bigotry is obvious. You are on the wrong side of history.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families. VOTE NO ON SENATE BILLS 479 and 480.

Sincerely,

Francesca Erickson

Neosho, WI 53059

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Jessica Patchett, and I am writing to share my grave concern about and opposition to Bill 480, known as the “Trans Medical Care Ban.”

I am the Pastor of a Christian congregation serving people from across Madison and several neighboring counties. My church members are Republicans, Democrats, and Independents. They are straight, gay, bisexual, Queer, trans, and intersex. They work in a wide range of professions – medicine, education, research, finance, construction, and small business ownership, to name a few.

A “Trans Medical Care Ban” – and even the very introduction and discussion of this bill – is harmful to all of them and us as your constituents.

Our trans youth are afraid that they will no longer be able to access essential care – and – feel like their political leaders see them as second-class citizens. Their parents are concerned to send their kids to school, because political rhetoric fuels youth bullying. Our doctors and nurses are dismayed that their political leaders do not trust their world-class training, discernment and expertise. Our trans adults warn that the psycho-social impact of violent public discourse fueled by these proposed bans is deadly. And, our business leaders are fed up with losing valuable time and money as they and their employees scramble to respond to ever-changing flurries of political activity that largely seem to be cruel and unusual partisan power grabs.

Members of our congregation who are committed Christians are aghast that Wisconsin political leaders would even consider legislation that takes the religious convictions of a few and uses them to limit the religious, political, and medical freedoms of the rest.

As Presbyterians, our understanding of the Christian faith – and the foundations of American democracy – tells us that we are all made in the image of God, with God-given intellect and freedom of conscience. We should be able to live without fear of any government tyrannizing us with legislation that interferes in decisions and pursuits that are our God-given right to pursue at our own discretion.

Please oppose this bill and return to the work of governing pursuits that heal rather than harm and uplift rather than oppress.

Rev. Dr. Jessica R. Patchett

Good morning, Members of the Senate Committee on Health, Senator Cabral-Guevera, Senator Testin, Senator Felzkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, and Senator Carpenter,

I, Amy Thomas, am a registered voter/neighbor/community member in Madison/Dane County. I have lived here for 25 years and am a member of the LGBTQ community.

I care about this bill/measure because my partner is trans as are several of my close friends.

As a member of this community, **I urge you to vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480** as they are likely to

... cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

... negatively impact the well-being of my community members. It is already difficult enough to access medical care. Please do not add unnecessary challenges to families of transgender individuals.

... cause medical providers in areas where there are already too few, to leave the state for areas where they are allowed to practice in alignment with their medical training and professional ethics.

I know you share in my care for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you **OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480 today**. You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,
Amy Thomas
Madison, WI 53714

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Lucy, and I am a resident of Brookfield. I've lived in Wisconsin for 34 years and have been a registered nurse for 10 years.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because they restrict healthcare rights and human rights. Also Senate Bill 479 could make the healthcare staffing shortages worse than they already are.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

From a Wisconsinite who loves their communities,

Lucy Medrow (they/she)

Brookfield, 53005

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Tony Salituro, and I am a resident of Madison, WI. I've lived in Wisconsin for 27 years and am proud to have lived and worked in this state my whole life.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because **I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.** Trans members of this state have shown me much kindness and deserve to have the same kindness given to them that this bill aims to take away.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin. For a government that prides itself in the tenets of "small government" it is extremely disappointing the lengths they will go to interfere with the personal and private lives of a targeted and marginalized group. Attempting to rush this decision through without providing adequate time for those to review the bill and provide public comment, while other government programs in the State of Wisconsin are held to higher standards and follow transparent and open conversations for public input on our decisions is upsetting.

There are more important issues that Wisconsin faces every day and time and effort should be spent on them, while non issues like the lives of trans people are instead the scapegoat.

Thank you,
Tony Salituro, 53705

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Lori Severson. I am a lifelong Madison resident, and I am also a mother of three.

I am writing to urge you to oppose Senate Bill 480. My middle child is transgender and she is thankfully 19 years old so this bill would not affect her. But it will impact other transgender youth across our state, and I know that the gender affirming care my daughter received as a teenager saved her life. The medical professionals who have overseen my daughter's health care, follow standards of medical care for transgender patients- standards that are endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association and other leading medical authorities. Denying this needed medical care and support to transgender youth puts them at increased risk of serious harms, including depression, self-harm, and/or suicidal thoughts or behavior. Hormone blockers are safe, well documented and essential care for some gender diverse youth. Decisions on appropriateness of hormone or other therapies should be left to Medical professionals, the individuals patients themselves and their families.

As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to this bill because I know firsthand of the daily struggles my daughter faces with gender dysphoria, the difficulty to access healthcare, the toll on her mental health. We should not be adding obstacles or denying care for our children. If passed, this bill will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQI youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

Please oppose Senate Bill 480.

Sincerely,

Lori Severson

Madison, WI 53711

Beloved, I am here to speak in opposition to Senate Bill 480 in the 2023-2024 Legislative Session. I have no desire to yell or insult any of you, I simply wish to tell you how this bill breaks my heart.

As a lifelong Christian, I have always been taught to love my neighbor regardless of their identity. I have failed so many times to live up to this command from Christ. One of my most shameful failures was a deep prejudice I held against LGBTQ+ people as a child. I'm deeply ashamed that I listened to the voices of my classmates and broader culture instead of listening to my parents and pastors. I am so thankful that the Holy Spirit broke open my heart, and taught me that no sexual or gender identity can separate us from the love of God. That God loves trans people as they are, and wants them to live into their fullness of life.

The Holy Spirit taught me this through a variety of passages, such as Acts 8:26-39, where St. Philip welcomes and baptizes a person we might call intersex or trans today, or through Galatians 3:28 which proclaims 'There is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus,' or in Matthew 19:12, where Jesus commands us to accept eunuchs, a group that was marginalized because their genitals did not match what society expected.

I can see no legitimate Christian grounds for advocating for Senate Bill 480 in this session. Christianity is inherently a religion of the marginalized, but just as angry religious people crucified Jesus, the church often likes to find its own group to persecute. For reasons I cannot understand, some Christians have decided that trans people are their next target. I pray that the Holy Spirit might break open their hearts as she has broken open mine.

Gender affirming care should be a decision between a child, their parents, and the child's medical providers. I cannot understand why this bill removes that decision from parents and medical providers, and puts it in the hands of the government.

Finally, I pray that in hearing all of our remarks, you might not let your heart get calcified to the suffering of others. If any of you have had to bury a beloved, you know how tempting it is to close off our hearts and become apathetic. As a pastor, I have buried many people I loved, so I understand the temptation. Please hear this word if nothing else, we cannot function together if we do not have empathy for each other. May God be with each of you. Thank you for this time.

Pr. Paul Drees

Members of the Senate Committee on Health,

I have been a resident of Wisconsin for my entire life, am a current resident of Marshall, and a career educator. My children have grown up here and I have taught hundreds of students in communities from Columbus to Madison.

PLEASE vote NO on these hateful Senate bills #s 479 and 480. These bills are anti-child and anti-family. If passed, these bills will cost Wisconsin the loss of beautiful children's lives and devastation to their families.

No child should have to face harassment and discrimination for any reason. LGBTQ+ youth and their families are entitled to make decisions about health care for themselves and their children in the same way as they might if their child needed a liver transplant or any other operation.

These decisions should be made between patients, their families and physicians only. **Politicians should stay out of these family matters.**

Hopefully,
Kari Augustine
Marshall, WI 53559

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Jolin Mitchel. I'm a mental health counselor and I've lived in Madison for the past 22 years.

I want to urge each of you to vote NO on SB 479 and 480. Despite what the language of these bills implies, the medical consensus is that supportive mental health services, social inclusion, and gender-affirming medical care serve the best interests of transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming (TNG) individuals.

Therefore, the legislature of this great state should not restrict what medical care TNG people can access and it should not discourage medical providers from providing that care.

Sincerely,
Jolin Mitchel
Madison, WI 53704

Entire committee of Bills SB 479 and SB 480,

My name is Elian Gomez, a resident of Stoughton, Wisconsin. I am testifying against SB 749, which allows patients to sue doctors after receiving gender affirming care, and SB 480, which prohibits people under the age of 18 from receiving gender affirming care.

I am an openly transgender person who began their transition under the age of 18. Before I was able to receive gender affirming medical care, I was incredibly suicidal and had immense struggles with my mental health. For me, as for many other young trans people, gender affirming care was the only option that I had to improve my life. There are many studies that support that gender affirming care improves the lives of trans people, including trans kids. I am living proof of that; without receiving the care that I needed at the age that I did, I would not be here today. By supporting SB 480 you are telling kids all over the state, and the country, that you do not care about whether they live or die. In fact, you are telling them that they deserve to be dead and that their lives are not worth saving. By supporting SB 480 you are going against the guidelines of every major medical organization within the United States, including the American Society of Pediatrics, the Endocrine Society, and the American Medical Association. Your choice to ignore medical guidelines that are used by over a million doctors within the United States because it does not support your political agenda should embarrass you.

Regarding SB 479, doctors should not be sued for doing their job correctly. As stated above, all major medical organizations within the United States support gender affirming care. Doctors within the state of Wisconsin follow these guidelines when giving life saving medical treatment to trans people. Doctors do not deserve to be sued for doing the job that they went to school for and were trained to do because it goes against your political agenda. If you do not wish to receive gender affirming care then do not go to a doctor to receive said care. It should not be the job of politicians, or any government body, to decide how medicine is practiced. Those guidelines need to be created by doctors who are educated and trained. Furthermore, it is not your job as a politician to bully doctors into avoiding practicing life saving gender affirming care.

If you would like to create a Wisconsin that is better for kids then create bills that fund public schools and provide better food security. Get out into communities and see the needs that children have and take that into legislation.

Trans kids deserve to be alive.

Sincerely,
Elian Gomez

My name is Amber Rusch, and I am a resident of the town of Washburn. I've lived in Wisconsin all my life and am married with two children. I work in Washburn as a Master's Level Mental Health Clinician.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because gender affirming care is extremely important to improving the mental health outcomes of Transgender people. They experience a disproportionate amount of poverty, physical health issues, and mental health issues and it is important for our society to help them thrive. Creating any more limitations on gender affirming care will lead to an increase in social issues. If people are able to receive gender affirming care, we can prevent a lot of problems and help our fellow Americans live a happy life.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Amber Rusch

Washburn, 54891

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Catherine Watkins. I'm a registered nurse who has lived in Wisconsin for over 20 years.

I am deeply concerned about SB 480. It is a flawed bill and I urge you to vote against it. Having read the justification and the notice that medical providers would be forced to give to families, it is misleading, unscientific, and intentional fear-mongering.

Let me start by acknowledging that across both sides of the aisle, we all want what is best for our young people. Yes, it is absolutely crucial that minors considering gender transition treatments are first provided high-quality psychosocial support and the best factual, medical information that is available. It is also important that any transition-related medications or procedures be done to the highest standards and ethics of medical care. On this, I believe we all agree.

This bill does not achieve those goals. It misleads, it is not based in fact, and it employs blatant scare tactics. Far from protecting our youth, this bill and the onslaught of anti-trans bills sweeping the country right now are doing significant and real harm to transgender youth. These young people need our protection, not WITH this bill, but FROM this bill.

Our youth and their families deserve better. They deserve unbiased, factual information. They deserve access to quality medical care. They deserve to be trusted to make the best decisions about their own health care without interference from the government.

Please vote no on SB 480.

Sincerely,
Catherine Watkins
Madison, WI 53704

I am writing to implore you to oppose the adoption of SB479 and SB480. I am the mother of a 16 year old transgender son who started puberty blocking hormone therapy at the age of 11, and started testosterone therapy at the age of 14. Prior to receiving his gender affirming care, provided by the highly skilled medical Team at the UW-Children's Hospital PATH Clinic in Madison, despite being treated with anti-depressants, my son had poor academic performance, extremely low self-esteem and suicidal ideation. With gender affirming care and treatment, he is now a High Honors Junior in High School who is on track to graduate High School with an Associates Degree in Humanities. He is Vice-President of his school's GSA, and is an empathetic young man who has a passion for social justice. As his parent, his Mom, I can tell you without a doubt in my heart, gender affirming care remains life saving treatment for my son.

These bills have been drafted in direct opposition to guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Medical Association. For those of you who are parents, aren't those who you yourself have looked to for guidance in the care of your own children? Why on earth should it be any different for my child? Or for any other transgender children in this state? These bills have been written under the guidance of NO medical or psychological authority or professional. Please, give transgender children the same consideration for having their medical care be guided by medical professionals. Thank you!

In Unity,

Mindy Frank
Green Bay, WI 54302

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Dr. Sharon Y. Alexander, and I am a resident of Illinois, but working in the Madison area. I've lived in Wisconsin for 4 years and as a staff member commuting to and from Wisconsin to Illinois because of the progressive and affirming care your state has placed on the rights of all its citizens, I thought this might be a place to bring my family.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Illinois resident who was seriously considering moving my family to Madison, I am opposed to these bills because I know the personal harm they cause to personal staff members I work with and their children, students I work with and care for with all my heart and soul and others I have worked with over the course of my almost 30 year career in public education. I find it disheartening and challenging that we are repeating the same issues we had over 50 years ago when looking at taking away the civil rights of some citizens. We do this, oftentimes, not being members of the impacted citizen's group and with some misinformed intent that what you are attempting to do is in some way **just, moral, and your role**. If this does not impact you, your loved ones or someone you directly know or have spoken with or have intimate connection to, **you should not be making any decisions that you know little to nothing personally about and in the end are not directly impacted by the decision made.**

As an individual of color, I continue to be appalled with those who continue to wield discrimination, bias and harm to others who often do not represent the groups being harmed and again have no direct impact of the decision made. If you say yes to this Senate Bill then you do not hear your constituents or even represent those who might desire to be a part of this state because you do not represent the voices of people who are directly affected by your ill-informed actions and decision-making.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin. These decisions have done so time and time again across our history and I for certain will make it known and I will work tirelessly to discourage people from coming to Wisconsin, a narrow-minded, harmful and dangerous state for diverse communities and un-American in its stance to harm anyone within its governance. Understanding leadership means avoiding personal bias, listening to the voices of others and stepping out of the way from making decisions that directly affect others, this should not be a decision you should be saying yes to. You must vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480!

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Sharon Y. Alexander

Fitchburg (Middleton), WI and Romeoville, Illinois

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Kayla Wolf. I am a resident of Darien, WI, municipality 64-004. I have lived in Wisconsin for 36 years.

I am writing you to URGE you to vote NO on senate bills 479 and 480.

My 9 year old son, fully awake. Trembling. Describing to me his recent nightmare. His eyes well with tears as he explains how horrified he was while watching his room fill with menstrual blood. He was trapped. Watching the blood flood his floor and rise upwards; covering his walls along with everything in sight.

There are no words on this planet to describe to you the sheer agony I feel when trying to imagine the range of complex emotions my small child experiences while he feels trapped inside of his own body.

My son's biggest fear is bleeding from his own body; menstruating. Growing breasts. The thought of these things cripple him with anxiety.

These things can EASILY be prevented. Since we met Jake's beautiful medical team at Children's Hospital Wisconsin, and secured him with gender affirming care; puberty blockers-- he has not experienced 1 nightmare. 1 emotional breakdown. Not one. He is one of the lucky ones. He will have 18 months of confirmed care. We need this to continue. You cannot take that away from him.

You cannot take that away from ANY child. Taking away their humanity. Their identity.... you cannot. Children will suffer. Children will DIE. Their blood will be on your hands.

Kayla L. Wolf
64-004,53114

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Leo Ryan, and I am a resident of City of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 19 years and am a current student at UW-Madison

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because it promotes hatred and intolerance. The only reason these bills are being presented is to capitalize on prejudice on hatred for political gain. Gender affirming care has been shown to drastically reduce suicide and depression rates. It is not hyperbole to say that this treatment saves lives. This bill puts the lives of thousands of Wisconsinites at risk and fans the flames of transphobia. As someone with trans friends, I look forward to the day when the future of their treatment is not under attack.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Leo Ryan
Madison, WI

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Dana McCormick, and I am a resident of Wauwatosa. I've lived in Wisconsin for 16 years with our four children, including a trans child.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. The bill is an insult to parents, children, and the professionals who care for our children. The people of Wisconsin are not looking to our legislature to make our healthcare decisions. We are not looking to our legislature to define how male or female or intersex or neither or both present and see themselves. Gender affirming care, particularly for children, is 1) none of the legislature's business and 2) primarily to do with how people see themselves and how other people see each other. It is beyond the scope and mandate and expertise of the legislature to parse out where gender affirming care begins and ends (because it is beyond your scope and mandate and expertise to parse and understand ever-shifting social norms around gender) - and who may pursue gender affirming care. Children shave and pluck hairs, even get laser hair removal, to affirm their gender, even and most often when that gender matches the sex on their birth certificates. Children wear cosmetics and clothing and children get cosmetic orthodontia, skin grafts, plastic surgery - with a view to social norms around gendered ideals of attractiveness. Children speak to therapists every day about their feelings, confusions, concerns, explicitly to affirm their understanding of themselves which necessarily touches on their gender expression, again regardless and in fact most often when their gender expression 'matches' the sex they were assigned at birth. Do you all seriously want to wade into this?? What characteristics read as male and female and who may display those characteristics? What topics a therapist may discuss with a child patient?? It's an appalling waste of public time and energy that this bill has even come up.

Politicians should stay well out of the personal, private medical decisions that parents and children make with their doctors.

Sincerely,

Dana McCormick
Wauwatosa 53213

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Bex Streit, and I work as the Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Program Coordinator at the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center. I am also a Transgender man and resident of the city of Milwaukee for the past 10 years.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bill 480. Let's put aside the sheer hypocrisy baked into this legislation that it would carve out exceptions for these supposedly "dangerous" medical practices to still be performed on intersex youth, or the sheer number of statistics and medical associations that support gender affirming care for young people. Instead, I'd like to talk about all the young people who I have had the great privilege to meet who are living fully, happy lives because they were able to access the life saving care they needed at an appropriate age. Often we hear the statistics of how detrimental it can be for young people to be denied the care they need. It is always important to keep that in mind but we forget to talk about how wonderful it can be for a young person to be able to fully be themselves. I cannot tell you how many Trans youth and adults alike have described the weight that is lifted when they are finally able to take steps to become the person they have always felt they were. I can personally attest to how accessing gender affirming care brought me the peace I needed to finally live a full and happy life. It is that joy that you will take away from young Wisconsinites.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families. Stop doing harm to young Wisconsinites by having these "debates" and work to correct the real problems in our state!

Sincerely,

Bex Streit

Milwaukee, WI 53212

My name is Carter. I'm a junior in college. I have two parents and a younger sister who I love very much. I enjoy theater, music, and being out in nature.

Receiving gender affirming care as a minor saved my life.

I started to realize I was trans at 12 years old, but I always knew something was different about me, long before I had the words to explain it. I started coming out to people close to me at 14 years old, and came out fully at 15. Puberty hit me early. I was probably about 8 or 9 when features I did not like started developing. These things caused me a lot of distress, but puberty's hard, right? It's normal, right? As I got older, my gender dysphoria only got worse. I hated my body. Everything felt wrong. When I first came out, I was not met with support. My parents told me that I would always be a girl to them and that it was like they were mourning the death of me. I resorted to binding my chest unsafely. I dreamed of the day that I would turn 18, leave everything in my life behind, and start transitioning. I struggled with self-harm and suicidal thoughts. I was being bullied at school.

With the help of my gender-affirming therapist, I learned how to cope with all the hardship I was facing. She helped me communicate with my parents, which helped them slowly accept me. Eventually we were even talking about pursuing medical transition, which I had been wanting desperately for years. I met with a doctor who specializes in trans patients, and she prescribed me testosterone a week before my 16th birthday. As the effects of testosterone progressed, I started feeling relief. My body was finally starting to match what I had been feeling for years. My self-harming and suicidal thoughts started to fade. My mental health and general well-being were improving so much.

Trying to get surgery was a different story. Getting gender-affirming surgery as a minor in the state of Wisconsin is almost impossible, even with it being legal. I tried to get chest masculinization surgery at 17. My insurance denied it and said to wait until 18. At 18, my insurance company completely denied coverage for my surgery. I paid out of pocket for it at age 18. I was privileged enough to have help from my parents paying for it, but many trans people are not. The idea of children being sterilized at 8 years old is a LIE made up by conservatives to undermine all trans people.

I have no regrets in any part of my transition. Neither do the vast majority of trans people.

Please vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. Trans lives depend on it. Politicians have no role in the private decisions that patients and healthcare professionals make.

Thank you.

My name is Maddie Batzli and I am a resident of Madison, WI and a member of the queer community. I am testifying on the importance of keeping gender affirming care available for people under 18. I am a non-binary person who has not personally pursued medical transition myself, but am writing to share about the positive impact these medical services have had on my loved ones and community. Gender affirming care is life-saving care. I have many friends who have benefited from puberty blockers, HRT, and other care during their teen years to help their bodies match their identities and drastically reduce or end their dysphoria, which had been causing poor mental health and suicidal thoughts, and even suicide attempts. The studies that have been cherry-picked to argue against gender affirming care are greatly outnumbered by research that shows gender affirming care increases quality of life and mental health for trans people. I am speaking out on behalf of my loved ones and community because trans people are a small minority of the population, and it has been easy and effective for people who are not trans to spread fear and misinformation about this minority group. For those of you who are not trans and don't know any trans people personally, this is a call to listen closely to what the vast majority of trans people are saying about the importance of gender affirming care as an option they can pursue. The goal of those of us who support gender affirming care has NEVER been to push cis kids to transition, but to ensure that trans youth SURVIVE to become adults. This is why I am calling to keep gender affirming care as an available option for youth. Thank you so much for hearing this testimony: your consideration is deeply appreciated.

Thank you,

Maddie Batzli
Madison, WI

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Lori Cannon and I am a resident of the Town of Washburn in Bayfield County. I've lived in Wisconsin for 18 years and I am a registered nurse and a parent who loves and cares about a number of transgender and non-binary children and adults.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because they are mean-spirited attacks on children and their medical providers when there are so many needs across the state that are going unaddressed, like rising costs of childcare, skyrocketing housing costs, limited mental health services, and more. But instead of helping the people they serve, state Assembly members and Senators are working to make life harder for a tiny minority of the population. The science is very clear that LGBTQ+ children are at a significantly higher risk of self-harm and suicide, and the majority of that risk is due to being told over and over again by politicians that they are somehow flawed and that the politicians know better than they and their doctors do. As a voter and a taxpayer, I am saddened and ashamed that my representatives are spending time and money trying to make the lives of children harder.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,
Lori Cannon
Town of Washburn, 54891

To: Honorable Senators Hutton, Tomczyk, Nass, Kapenga and Bradley and the Committee on Health

RE: SB 479 and SB 480

My name is Anne Thelke and I am a resident of Waukesha, WI.

I support the freedom to access healthcare and OPPOSE SB 479 and 480 which would deny life saving care for trans youth and put undue threats and pressures on our medical care professionals.

As a teacher of more than 30 years, I have seen medical and psychological success and support that trans youth and their families have received from medical professionals. These bills will add insurmountable stress to all involved parties and further the gross negativity toward OUR trans kids.

We all want what is best for children and we need to leave gender affirming care to the medical professionals and the families they serve. As politicians, you do not hold any credibility to make decisions for trans kids.

Sincerely,
Anne Thelke

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Lucy , and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 22 years, I work as a wine sales rep, and I have a husband and a dog. I also do activist work for abortion and reproductive rights in the Madison community.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because I believe everyone deserves to live in their body comfortably and authentically. I don't believe anyone in the Government has a right to tell someone who they are or to prosecute those who help them. I'm well aware of the lengths a government will go to control people they find threatening to their world view. I urge you to start making bills that don't oppress your constituents. All of us deserve to live authentically. All of us deserve the right to happiness. Trans kids belong and deserve that right just as much as you or I do.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Lucy Kenyon

Madison

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Dayne, and I am a resident of Arena. I've lived in Wisconsin for 21 years and I got into the healthcare field as a way to advocate for those who don't have the voice to do so.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because I have a plethora of trans friends that I can be well assured would have been affected by this bill had it been implemented when we were that age, and the thought of that disgusts me.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin. If passed, I will be certain to research the affirmative votes and make sure to support and advocate all of their opponents in their next primary election.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,
Dayne Louis
Arena, WI

To the members of the Senate committee preparing to vote on Senate Bill 479 and 480.

I am a retired educator _ and registered voter in the township of Union - Southern Door County, WI. -I have voted at this location for the past 17 years - and have lived and voted in Door County, WI my entire life I am committed to preserving the rights of ALL members of my community to make their own medical decisions without government intervention.

I understand that these two bills would infringe on the rights and medical decisions of the transgender community. Although I personally don't understand the need for anyone to change their gender, (one can dress and act as they wish), I strongly believe Government needs to stay out of people's personal medical decisions. And equally, our medical personnel should not be discouraged from working in our communities because of government regulations that would threaten their jobs! We have enough personal issues to monitor and police without adding another dept. of government.

Please vote no

Yvonne Stukenberg

Luxemburg, WI 54217

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Valerie Van Horn and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for #17 years and I am the proud parent of a transgender child.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because transgender care is a medical decision that should be made between a patient, their family, and medical professionals.

When My child came out as trans, I was afraid of the whole process and afraid for him and the possibility of a difficult life. However, with the help of some good doctors and a great therapist, things have turned out really well. My son started on testosterone when he has about 15, and in the past year he has had gender confirming surgery. He is a successful college student worked as a camp counsellor over the summer. My child is a true delight.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Valerie Van Horn

Madison, WI 53711

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Al Blanchard, and I am a resident of Waunakee. I've lived in Wisconsin for 32 years and have been an out member of the community for about half of that.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because healthcare is a human right and doctors shouldn't be afraid of getting sued for providing care. I received gender affirming care a few years ago and not only was it life changing but it probably helped save my life.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Al Blanchard

Waunakee, 53597

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Jay Galt, and I am a resident of Allouez. I've lived in Wisconsin for 17 years and I am a transgender teen. My pronouns are they/them.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As the president of my high school Gender Sexuality Alliance, I know many young transgender people personally, and the majority of us want to pursue gender-affirming healthcare. Gender-affirming care is not dangerous, is reversible, and is frequently life-saving. Many transgender people suffer from gender dysphoria, which is the feeling that one is not living truly as their gender. Gender dysphoria can cause a lot of other mental struggles, including depression and suicidal thoughts. Gender-affirming care is usually the only cure for this, and it really does work.

These bills are asinine. If someone discovered a magical cure for depression and suicidal thoughts for non-trans people, doctors and politicians would be celebrating. That is essentially what gender-affirming care is. Furthermore, these bills are targeting minors, who are already extremely vulnerable. I care deeply for the LGBTQ+ kids in my school. If anyone here dies because they cannot access gender-affirming care, or because their care is suddenly cut off, I don't know what I'd do. Many of the kids here already have to wait until they're independent due to unaccepting parents, and then wait even longer because of the wait lines and hoops we have to jump through to receive this important care. Why would you force the lucky ones to suffer too?

If passed, I assure you, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Jay Galt

Allouez, 54301

Plymouth Congregational
United Church of Christ
2401 Atwood Avenue Madison, WI 53704

Rev. Leslie Schenk, Pastor
Phone (608) 249-1537
lschenk@pcucc.org

October 11, 2023

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Leslie Schenk, and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 28 years and serve as a pastor of a church located in Madison.

I am writing to urge you to **vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480**. As a Wisconsinite and a person of faith, I am opposed to these bills because they discriminate against our transgender neighbors, their families, and their medical professionals.

If passed, **these bills will cost lives**. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment, discrimination, and being stigmatized just for who they are, leading to increased rates of depression, suicide attempts, and suicides, **we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin, just as we would treat other youth. All are precious in the eyes of God.**

I do not believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Peace and blessings,

Rev. Leslie Schenk

Madison, WI

Church: 53704

Residence: 53716

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Natalie Wolf, and I am a resident of Janesville Wisconsin. I've lived in Wisconsin for 33 years and an educator in this state for 10. I see first hand that our government has NO business interfering with our children's lives and choices.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because our children deserve a voice and they deserve a choice about their bodies. Our beautiful trans kids are living under severe bullying and scrutiny every day. The last thing they need is our government making decisions that they have literally NO FACTUAL EVIDENCE OR INFORMATION ABOUT. The number one cause of death with children ages 10-25 is suicide. Children who are more at risk for suicide is our LGBTQ+ children. Stay out of their lives and well being. Please.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Natalie Wolf
Janesville, WI 53546

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

I'm a trans Wisconsinite who grew up here and now lives in Madison. I've known I'm trans for 20 years, since the Bush days, when there was no positive conversation around trans people in any way. It is not a phase, and it's not something people do willy-nilly.

Please vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. Gender-affirming care is critical; doctors aren't legislated against when it comes to cancer treatment, so why are they on this issue?

LGBT people are your friends and family, we're doctors and teachers and other people who are valuable in your communities. We deserve the same respect as everyone else.

Sincerely,

Iris Wendt

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Beshkwe TwoCrow, and I am a resident of Green Bay. I've lived in Wisconsin for almost 17 years. I am a 16-year-old Indigenous Mexican transgender boy. I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. I will now share some of my story with you.

I have always felt something was off with what I was told to be, and I finally worked up the courage to suggest to my mother that I was anything but a girl. I remember the exact moment I came out to my mother when I was ten. I was waiting for her to come home from work. I told her there was something I wanted to discuss, but when she finally came home I got cold feet. But my loving mother could tell I needed to say something. With her gentle support, I could finally say what I had been feeling for so long, "Mom, I don't think I'm a girl." She looked at me, processed what she heard, and then asked me what she could do and what that meant for our family. I just told her that I didn't know what I wanted to do at the moment; I just knew that the name I was given, and the feminine appearance I had at the time made me feel gross. Before I transitioned, I looked in the mirror and tried to see the "beautiful girl" that everyone told me that I was. But to me, there was no girl; there never was. I felt itchy in my skin; I felt like I was being constantly shoved into a tight suit that I could not get out of. Luckily, my mother is the most supportive parent I could ever ask for.

I have socially transitioned since then. With careful thought and the medical recommendation from dozens of healthcare professionals, I went on puberty blockers for three and a half years; I started puberty at nine. I have been on testosterone for almost two and a half years now. I can safely say that I would not be here without the gender-affirming medical care that I have received. Gender-affirming care is not something handed out liberally; there is a lot of thought and time put into it. It's not something easily accessible.

This bill is written with the thought of protecting children; it is supposed to protect children from making decisions that will affect them for the rest of their lives. The bill can not protect the adulthood of LGBTQ+ youth if they don't live long enough to reach it. Many studies show that when LGBTQ+ youth receive support and medical care, suicidal ideations decrease dramatically. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families. Parents know what's best for their children. If you are a parent, even if you don't agree with or understand it, wouldn't you do anything to save your child's life?

Sincerely,

Beshkwe TwoCrow.

Green Bay, 54302

To: Senate Committee on Health
RE: SB 479 and SB 480

My name is Gina Pili, and I am a resident of Cambridge, WI 53523.

I am the mother of a 20 year old transgender adult who started their transition when they were 17 years old, a senior in high school.

I don't boast to have all the knowledge on this and for me this is very simple. I love, respect and support my child for who they are....period! Was it hard to learn that my child is transgender, yes. Was and am I scared for them, yes. But I find my peace in watching my child grow into who they truly are and want to be.

You see I got to read my child's suicide letter, which I do not wish upon anyone. Take a moment to think about how that feels as a parent. Now think about how it feels as a child to write that letter. Seriously think about this as if it was your own child. Would you tell them it's not a real thing and that there's nothing they can do about it? Would you want others, including the government making that decision for your child? Then what? How do you help your child?

I plead with you to please support healthcare for transgender. Please hear the voices of transgender as they speak their truth. Put yourself in their position, and how would that feel for you? What would you want for yourself or your child?

Thank you.

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Jamie Hawkins and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 9 years and I am a parent to two young children.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because we need to support all families and their right to choose the care that is best for them. I want to share some more about my family and the ways in which these bills, especially Bill 480, could impact my child.

When my now 4 year old was born, she, like all babies, could not talk. She could not tell us what she wanted her name to be or what her gender identity is. She didn't even have the words to tell us what her genitalia was. So we, like all parents, took a look at her and gave her the name we chose. The gender we thought she was based on the genitalia we could see. To us our daughter was a boy. We used he/him pronouns and named him based on a male character from a book we loved. When my child was old enough to gain the language of gender she told us she is a girl. She told her teachers she is a girl, she told her friends. She told strangers and acquaintances. There was no questioning it in her mind. She was not confused. She was certain. We thought maybe she would grow out of it, because she was, well...so little! However, when she was three months shy of turning four she clearly and decisively told us that she wants us to use she/her pronouns. She, not he/him. She is a girl, a sister, a daughter. Again, she was not confused. She was certain and she still is.

Now I cannot tell you what comes next, over the next eight to 10 years as my daughter begins to hit puberty and have to reckon with the changes her body is going to make. I do not know. What I do know is that I want her to have the choice to manage all of the changes in a way that feels best to her and best for our family. I want to be able to continue to work with my very supportive pediatrician to access the care that she needs.

When I listened to the house speak last week about the so-called "Help Not Harm" bill I heard a question that misconstrued what occurs when accessing gender affirming care for children. No my 4 year old will not begin medical treatments at this age, no my teenager will not immediately go in for gender affirming surgeries. What my young teen may need is support both medically and emotionally. She will need to live in a place where she knows that her body is her own, that she can choose how to move through the world. Gender affirming medical care encompasses a wide range of support and these bills work to stoke fear and controversy mostly about something the authors have very little understanding of.

Authors of these bills have continued to say that talk therapy is a way to help children work through their gender identity. That talk therapy can support a child and take the place of being able to access gender affirming medical care. What I can tell you is that my daughter will be in therapy, but not because she needs support in figuring out who she is, she will be in therapy to have support while trying to just be a kid who lives in a world where people are trying to erase her. Where those in power want to take away her choices, control her body and not allow her parents to help her make the options that feel best for her.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Jamie Hawkins

Madison, WI 53704

On account of SB-480

I am Wolfi Zellmer, though you will never see such a name on my birth certificate. And I address the entirety of the Committee of Health and all at this hearing when I say that this bill is just another reason for young, transgender children to kill themselves. I am transgender, hell I tried to kill myself four times before I found help through medical intervention. It saves lives to simply let people do as they please with their bodies. Do you know how much it would've helped me as a child? No, all you want is control, control of bodies that don't belong to you, don't belong to their parents either. The bodies of these minors belong to those minors. Who are you to control what is never and will never be your own? Fools, all of you.

Sincerely,

A transgender man with rage in his heart

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Jennifer Smith, and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin all my life. I've spent a great deal of my professional life pickup economic development. I have family and friends who are trans.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because they are inhumane, well increase trans medical costs, health and mental health issues, and suicide. They will also put a damper on medical recruitment to the state, a field that is already in high recruitment demand and which would severely damage the state's reputation for medical education and practice.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Smith

Madison WI 53714

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

Hello, my name is Zach Shea, I have been a resident of Madison for over 7 years and I am writing in opposition to SB 480 and SB 479.

I am a bit surprised I have to write in opposition to this measure, as I was under the impression that the majority of representatives in our state had expressed opposition to government intervention in healthcare.

When I look at the Family Policy Alliance's website (the organization Rep Allen appears to have copied his bill from) they report a biblical opposition to all gender-affirming care. If this is the ground for Representative Allen's introduction of this bill, it is disappointing to learn his support for freedom of religion has waned to the point he will support coercive policy.

Representative Allen has also argued studies show 98% of children diagnosed with dysphoria reconcile these feelings. However, he failed to note that the study he appears to be referencing is over 40 years old and used a different definition for gender dysphoria than is currently used by the majority of professionals.

Likewise, Representative Allen has claimed the UK has stopped using surgery as a "first-line" treatment. I am not sure why he finds this remarkable, as there is no doctor in Wisconsin who would prescribe "drug" treatments or surgery as the first course.

Additionally, no current providers of puberty blockers or hormone treatment in Wisconsin will do so without parental consent. And there are currently no providers in Wisconsin who perform any surgical interventions within the state.

We must also recognize that GnRHa (or puberty blockers, often the first "drug" treatment given to adolescent patients) is a time-sensitive treatment that diminishes in benefit as time passes. A fact Representative Allen and his cosponsors seem to consistently get wrong is that there are no providers who will initiate GnRHa before extensive non-medical interventions have been taken, as doctors recognize the nature of these medications makes them hard to study. But they also have proven benefits. Even beyond the psychological benefits to a child experiencing dysphoria, GnRHa reduces the invasiveness of future procedures, and so the risk of complications. I would encourage Representative Allen to read the paper 'Is puberty delaying treatment 'experimental treatment'?' by Girodano and Holm, as published by the NIH if he would like to see the opinions of professionals who agree with him regarding the challenges of studying such treatments, while still acknowledging their very apparent benefits.

Given all these facts I hope the committee will reconsider its faulty position in proposing these bills in the first place.

Zachary Shea
Madison, WI

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Caitlin DuFour, and I am a Provider in Iron County Wisconsin. I've lived on the border of Wisconsin for 7 years and I provide health care in a small rural community.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because we know that statistically, provision of gender affirming care decreases feelings of stigma, isolation, and rejection. Therefore, it decreases the risk of suicide.

If we do not stand up for our youth, then we are telling them that they do not matter and that we do not think they belong in society. We cast them aside to the margins and leave them vulnerable to suicide.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Caitlin DuFour

Markia Silverman-Rodriguez

October 11th, 2023

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Markia Silverman-Rodriguez, and I am a resident of Madison, Wisconsin. I've lived in Wisconsin for all 24 years of my life. I am a Wisconsin voter and taxpayer, and graduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because banning trans healthcare is in direct opposition to scientific literature and the most recent WPATH standards of care. These bills are not based on science and sense, but fear and prejudice. Numerous peer reviewed studies have shown the life-saving effects of gender-affirming healthcare. All these bills will do is isolate and vilify a vulnerable community.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Markia Silverman-Rodriguez (she/her)

Madison, WI 53705

Kai DeRubis

To the Senate Committee on Health

Regarding Senate Bill 479, and Senate Bill 480

10/11/2023

I am in **opposition** to these bills.

Hello, my name is Kai DeRubis. I am a transgender man living in Wisconsin and I'm nearly 20 years old. I am testifying **against** Senate Bills 479 and 480.

Several years ago, I was diagnosed with gender dysphoria by both my primary care physician and my therapist. This means that my identity does not align with my assigned gender at birth, so certain parts of my experience with gender are deeply upsetting and cause emotional turmoil. When I was 16 years old, I had the incredible opportunity to start my medical transition. I'm truly grateful that I was able to start the process as a teen rather than deal with this pain until adulthood.

In 2020, I completed the process of preparing for top surgery, also known as a double mastectomy or chest masculinization surgery. I had to meet with a therapist for 8 months to get a letter stating that this was medically necessary. I also had to get signed permission from my parents and go through a lengthy consultation process with my surgeon. The surgery was performed at the Children's Hospital, only lasted about two hours, and I was able to go home that day. The healing process went smoothly and there were no complications. Three years later, I have full sensation in my chest, everything about it feels natural to me, and I've never looked back.

Getting top surgery at 16 has allowed me to walk confidently into my adulthood and begin to feel at home in my skin. I've pursued opportunities I never would have taken had I not gotten this surgery. Now that my body and brain are congruent, I feel connected to my sense of self and aligned with my identity. I am now exploring who I am instead of dwelling on my dysphoria. Gender-affirming surgery is NOT mutilation. My body is fully functional and healthy, and the decision was made in conjunction with my parents and medical professionals. It is truly heart-wrenching that this opportunity is being ripped from the hands of other transgender people. The government should have

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Meg Abramson, and I am a resident of Fond du Lac County. I've lived in Wisconsin for pretty much my whole life- 25 years and have lived in 6 different towns/cities across the state. My husband and I both received our undergraduate degrees and have completed/ are working towards Master degrees through UW Schools. I am an Advanced Practice Licensed Social Worker with the state of Wisconsin and have been practicing at a county Agency for the past 3 years since completing my Master's program.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480.

As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because I support the rights of my loved ones and all Wisconsin citizens to be able to obtain necessary care without delay, judgment, or apathy. As a social worker, I am a strong advocate of individuals' rights to health and happiness. The government has no business making or governing decisions of those making decisions for their own best self.

If passed, these bills will **cost lives**. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Megan Abramson, APSW
Fond du Lac, WI 54937

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Lisa Tutskey, and I am a resident of Brown County/ Ledgeview. I've lived in Wisconsin for my entire life. I am a marriage and family therapist, mother, and advocate for fair and equitable treatment of all people in our state. Part of my job is to ensure that those entrusted to my care, receive the best care possible and are treated as unique individuals. I work with all ages including children, adolescents, adults and couples and families.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because it is discrimination against others and is the start of hate towards a minority community. We need to support those who offer gender affirming care, as the need for gender affirming care is necessary and real. To stop offering this care does not make this population go away. Instead it increases their risk of other serious health issues and mental health implications.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,
Lisa Tutskey, LMFT
Ledgeview/Brown County resident
54115

Dear Committee Members,

I write today to express my unequivocal opposition to SB 479 and SB 480 which would ban all forms of gender affirming care for minors in Wisconsin and allow doctors who provide that care to be sued.

Gender affirming care is life saving. It is recognized and guided by medical organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association and the American Psychological Association.

These bills would put politicians in the role of medical experts - which they most certainly are not. These bills would insert politicians in the middle of the sacred relationship between doctors and their patients. They would infringe on the most basic of our rights as Americans - the right to privacy and to bodily autonomy.

Decisions about the health of trans youth should be between themselves, their doctors and their families. Politicians have NO business and no constitutional or moral right to interfere. It is harmful and cruel.

I have heard supporters of these policies claim that there is an epidemic of trans and gender diverse youth medically transitioning. This is just not true. The idea that youth are transitioning on a whim, because they saw something on TikTok or because someone "groomed" them is not backed up by any evidence. In fact, the opposite is true. Medical transitioning requires a significant amount of counseling and is governed by rigorous medical standards. Young children do not receive gender affirming drugs or surgery. Here are the facts:

* In 2019 there were approximately 13,000 gender re-assignment surgeries performed in the US, which had a population of 329 million. NONE was performed on someone under the age of 18.

* In contrast, according to the American Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons, in 2020 over 230,000 cosmetic surgeries were performed on youth aged 13-19 (the most common being rhinoplasty).

*If these bills were really concerned with protecting youth from having surgery to change their bodies before they are old enough to make an informed decision, it would be banning cosmetic surgery, not gender affirming care.

Opponents of care claim that people who transition usually regret it. This is not backed up by facts. Recent studies show that less than 1% of individuals who medically transition regret it. In comparison, 30% of individuals who have knee surgery regret it. Yet no one is trying to ban knee surgery. Once again, the facts imply that the purpose of these bills are to target transgender individuals, not to protect them.

There is an epidemic that needs to be addressed, however - an epidemic of transgender youth attempting suicide. According to the CDC, transgender youth are three times more more likely to attempt suicide than cis gendered youth. Three out of 10 trans kids have attempted to end their life at least once. SB 479 and SB 480 would not protect kids from anything - in fact it would increase stigmatization of trans youth, decrease access to appropriate care and likely result in higher rates of suicide.

There is extremely strong scientific and medical consensus that transgender people exist and that transition-related care is clinically appropriate and medically necessary. This position is backed by the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Psychological Association, and others. Study after study shows that people who have access to gender affirming care have better mental and physical health, higher school achievement, and reduced rates of suicide.

I urge you to vote against SB 479, SB 480 and any other efforts to withhold or politicize the medical treatment of trans youth and adults. Leave medical decisions to those qualified to make them - patients and their doctors.

Sincerely,

Lisanne Nelson Brandon
Oconomowoc WI 53066

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Christie Nelson Coble, and I am a resident of Luxemburg, WI in Kewaunee County. I've lived in Wisconsin for 25 years and I am a psychologist, wife, and the mother of three young adults.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because I do believe there are individuals who have primary and/or secondary sex characteristics at birth that are incongruent with their sense of self, feelings and reactions. I am concerned if passed, these bills will be detrimental to these individuals. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Christie Nelson Coble
Luxemburg, WI 54217
Kewaunee County

Allison Erena
Regarding Wisconsin Legislature
October 11th 2023

To the Senate Committee on Health:

My name is Allison Erena and I am a graduate student at UW-Madison in the Astronomy Department. I am writing to express grave concern as a Wisconsin resident, voter, and taxpayer in regard to Senate Bills 479 and 480. I am testifying to OPPOSE this bill.

These bills are grounded in fearmongering and falsehoods, ignoring the standards of care put forth in the most recent WPATH publication¹, which more than covers any reasonable concerns for the treatment of transgender youth. If passed, these bills would prevent transgender minors from seeking the care they so critically need, as determined by their care team (including *medical professionals, guardians, and themselves*; note that this *does not and should not include the state legislature*). Such minors are not, as certain members of the legislature have voiced, seeking various surgeries; rather, they wish to utilize puberty blockers². These have been a form of gender-affirming care used for cisgender minors since the 1980s (e.g. as a treatment for precocious puberty) and have been approved as such by the FDA since 1993, making bills like this all the more blatantly an attack on transgender individuals' rights.

Puberty blockers simply serve to halt the development of secondary sex characteristics, until such a time as the patient wishes to discontinue their use. According to e.g. the Mayo Clinic, these drugs are administered to minors when they start puberty, at whatever age that happens to be, and require the consent of the minor's parents or guardians to proceed. They also state that puberty blockers generally do *not* have lasting physical effects once stopped (although, as with any medication, there are risks associated, but that is to be addressed as needed by the care team).

It is, frankly, mind-boggling that this Assembly is so passionate about restricting their use when they are a reversible treatment and are so widely shown to drastically improve mental health, particularly in the case of transgender youth. To deny such care to anyone, regardless of identity, is atrocious.

To continue to bring these bills to the floor, even if they are vetoed by the Governor, is not only cruel; it is an unnecessary endeavor. You are showing your transgender constituents and transgender minors in the state of Wisconsin that you do not support them and refuse to advocate for them. You are consistently reminding us of your dismissal of widely-accepted standards of care put forth by global professionals on this topic, as well as your dismissal of the great deal of distress such legislation causes the transgender population within and outside of the state.

As a Wisconsin resident, I cannot be silent. For the sake of transgender youth in Wisconsin, for my friends, and for my younger self, I implore you to vote against Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480.

Thank you for reading my testimony.

Sincerely,
Allison Erena
(they/them)
Senate District 26, zip 53703

¹ Most recent World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) Standards of Care (SOC) publication from Sept 2022:

² Overview of puberty blockers, most importantly including effects, benefits, criteria for use, and long-term impact:

Dear Senators,

I write to you with a desperate plea to vote against bills SB 479 and 480 and protect the lives of trans people in the state of Wisconsin. As a lifelong Wisconsinite, and a Transgender woman it's difficult to put into words just how hurtful these bills are. I first came out to my peers when I was 15 years old in the year 2012, but I wasn't in any way scared to come out to them, I was only self assured in who I was even if the world had not quite caught up to my identity yet. My parents didn't understand what I was growing through, neither did the medical professionals in Wisconsin at that time, and it was difficult to receive care without laws for informed consent. That said, my fellow students did affirm my identity regardless and I began showcasing my gender identity publicly with relatively no backlash. When I was 18, I first tried my hand at receiving hormones for the first time outside of the watchful eye of my parents, but unfortunately the doctor I regularly saw throughout my adolescence was not very versed in trans identities and did not have the desire to affirm my identity. I left with little hope, and ended up making my first attempt at suicide and calling the Trevor support line after that failed appointment. I tried to bury my identity into the background for several more years and several more suicide attempts, only to finally transition medically when I moved to Boston for my second year of college at the age of 22. It saved my life. It was like everything finally made sense, gender affirming care has vastly improved my mental health and wellbeing and my only wish is that I could have been afforded the opportunity earlier in life. Doctors prescribing this care are heroes, we're lucky to have some incredible doctors in Wisconsin these days that do affirm trans identities and I'm happy to see them after moving back to Wisconsin after college a couple years ago. Today I am a successful woman in my field, even being featured in the "Future is Female" series in On Milwaukee magazine this past year for my efforts in the field of Music and my life is not in any way hindered by the gender affirming care and surgeries I have received, it has vastly improved my quality of life and helped me to find the strength to better reach my goals and become a better person. Please do not pass these bills, these kids deserve a future and these doctors should be able to do their jobs without hesitation because the care they provide is truly medically necessary and important.

Thank you for your time.

Ellee Ingle (she/her)
Milwaukee, WI 53211

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Erin Buenzli
and I am a resident of
Appleton, Wi. I've lived in Wisconsin for
49 years
and
I live with my partner and twin girls.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills
479 and 480.

As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because people's lives
are at stake when you withhold
treatments and threaten doctors with lawsuits that prevent individuals
from getting the care they need. I can't imagine telling my daughter that
she couldn't be treated for anxiety because the government
discriminates against mental health.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are
already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be
making it clear
that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

**I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private
medical decisions that should only be made between patients,
their doctors,
and their families. These are the people that are best suited to
help, not legislation.**

Sincerely,

Erin Buenzli

Appleton, WI 54911

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Roxanne Vivian, and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin my whole life, and I am happy to call it my home. This is why I am urging you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. I want Wisconsin to be a place that is safe and welcome for all, including LGBTQ+ youth. Gender-affirming care is a vital practice for transgender individuals to have access to, at any age. Receiving this care can greatly improve their overall mental health and well-being, and in some cases can be life-saving. That is why it is important to make sure access to this care is readily available to those who need it. Without that access, it will cost lives. I don't believe access to this care should be decided by politicians, but should remain a private decision between the patient, their doctor, and their family.

Sincerely,

Roxanne Vivian

Madison

Good morning, Members of the Senate Committee on Health, Senator Cabral-Guevera, Senator Testin, Senator Feizkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, and Senator Carpenter,

I, Jessica Darling, am a registered voter/neighbor/community member in the Merrimac and Sauk Prairie community. I have lived here for ten years. I am a business owner and Family Medicine physician currently practicing in Sauk City, WI. I am also a family member of multiple individuals in the LGBTQ community.

I care about this bill/measure because I provide resources and care to trans individuals as well as other members of the LGBTQ community and deeply care about their physical and emotional well-being. It is my belief that every person deserves to have autonomy over their own body and that every person deserves to feel happy and safe.

As a member of this community, **I urge you to vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480** as they are likely to cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin. It will negatively impact the well-being of my community members. It is already difficult enough to access medical care. Please do not add unnecessary challenges to families of transgender individuals.

I also believe it may cause medical providers in areas where there are already too few, to leave the state for areas where they are allowed to practice in alignment with their medical training and professional ethics.

I know you share in my care for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you **OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480 today**. You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Jessica Darling, DO
Merrimac, WI 53561

To the Senate Committee on Health,

I am writing in opposition of SB 479 and SB 480. There are many lies and misconceptions about what gender affirming care is. Simply calling some by their chosen pronouns and acknowledging them as the gender they wish to be acknowledged as is gender affirming care. This simple bit of respect literally saves lives. Frankly I'm sick of groups that claim to be pro-life constantly aligning themselves with choices that are anything but. I have many friends who are non-binary or trans. I work with adolescents, who sometimes are non-binary or trans. Let me tell you, they all have a greater quality life when they receive respect and proper care. Both of these bills are horrific but for me especially, if SB 480 passes, you will put me in position where I will be forced to cause mental harm and anguish on vulnerable youth. This WILL lead to more self-harm and this WILL lead to more suicides, which last I checked, is literally the opposite of pro-life. I will not have blood on my hands and deaths to my name because you all can't handle the fact some people are different from you expected. Let the youth of Wisconsin receive proper care and respect and let them grow up to live long and happy lives.

Sincerely, Alicia of Milwaukee Wisconsin

Nate Wolff
Appleton, WI 54914

Here we are again with the same culture war nonsense that Republicans obsess over. Instead of actually helping people in the state while they work two to three jobs just to get by. You've decided we need to attack .01 percent of our population. I'd say do your jobs but clearly you don't have any actual answers to real problems. So you play politics and ignore the real problems in the state.

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Monica Steger, and I am a resident of Theresa, Wisconsin. I've lived in Wisconsin for 37 years and I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills.

Banning gender-affirming care makes no sense to me. Doctors who offer such care provide what fits each individual patient and they do not force treatments upon everyone who walks in the door, no matter what.

Gender-affirming care helps those who need it feel like they can stand being themselves in their own minds and bodies. It is life-saving. Without it, more people succumb to suicide attempts to end the misery that many non-transgendered folks don't understand.

It also bothers me that we have normalized certain kinds of gender-affirming care whilst ostracizing others because the normalized care caters toward a heteronormative society. This includes hormone replacement therapy, or Viagra, or plastic surgery to enhance one's breasts.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin. I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Monica Steger, Theresa, Wisconsin 53091

My name is Isa Marceau, my pronouns are she/they, and I am the youth minister at St Dunstan's Episcopal Church in Madison. I am going to tell you about ways I provide gender affirming care in my youth program.

I ask my kids their correct name, correct pronouns, and when it is correct to use them. We frequently reintroduce ourselves using both name and pronouns, especially when guests are present. There is no dress code other than, "please wear a coat when it's cold." Menstruation products are clearly labeled as such in a common area. All our bathrooms are gender neutral, and when we are in public, I make sure they know they can treat them as such because I've got their backs. On overnights, I don't split up the group into genders, I just make sure the space is big enough for everyone. And, it is made abundantly clear to parents & adult volunteers involved that this group is for every child of God, nevermind the details.

In short, my goal is to "to create an environment of safety in which emotions, questions, and concerns can be explored," as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. So I want to ask you, when do these laws start to affect my youth program and the holy, safe haven I am able to give the children in my church and wider community?

And I can tell you, it does right now.

During evening compline and bimonthly office hours, I have the distinct honor to hear about sports, friendships, performances, tryouts, classes, college applications, and grapplings with identity. I hear how they view the world and how the world is treating them. I hear immense concern for family and friend, environment and community. I am so blessed to be trusted by them.

You know what I don't hear about? Their medical decisions. Because that is not my place and I am not their doctor.

As lawmakers, it isn't your place either. All we can do, as adults in positions of significant power, is research and deference to the adults whose place it *is* and who *are* experts in this field. I am staying in my lane by researching and listening to the experts on the matter of social, psychological, behavioral, and medical interventions in regards to gender affirming care.

If you do the same, you will vote NO on the reckless, heartless, arrogant bill called SB480.

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Karlie Haug and I am a resident of Madison WI. I've lived in Wisconsin for 5 years and I am a physician who is proud to care for all Wisconsin residents. I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. These bills will cost lives if they are passed. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin. Furthermore, I am opposed to these bills because my professional and ethical imperative as a doctor is to take the best possible care of my patients - and these bills would prohibit that. It is unconscionable for the state of Wisconsin to interfere in the patient-doctor relationship in this way and these bills must not be passed.

Sincerely,
Karlie L. Haug, MD

Madison WI, Zip 53705

Good morning, Members of the Senate Committee on Health, Senator Cabral-Guevera, Senator Testin, Senator Felzkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, and Senator Carpenter,

I, Graeson M. Martuneac, am a registered voter in Madison [Dane Co]. I have lived here for 3 years and am a member of the LGBTQ+ community, a person of faith, and friend to many in the LGBTQ+ community.

I care about this bill/measure because I have friends with queer and trans kids who need access to gender affirming care to maintain their mental health. Denying kids the right to express themselves and to be who they tell us they are is dangerous - it takes away their autonomy - it strips parents of the right to raise their children as they see fit - it opens the child up to suicidal ideations - they would rather **DIE** than live in a body that does not feel like theirs - they would rather **DIE** than be told they cannot go by a different name or dress a certain way - they would rather **DIE** than be forced to live in this world as a person they do not recognize. That is how serious kids are about being allowed to be themselves - who are you to stand in their way - who are you to say how a parent is allowed to parent when the choices are being child-led. No one is *forcing* kids to be trans - they are *allowing* children to explore their identity and much of the gender affirming care is being called the right name, using their proper pronouns, allowing them to dress how they wish, and

As a member of this community, I urge you to vote **NO** on Senate Bills 479 and 480 as they are likely to

... cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

... negatively impact the well-being of my community members. It is already difficult enough to access medical care. Please do not add unnecessary challenges to families of transgender individuals.

... cause medical providers in areas where there are already too few, to leave the state for areas where they are allowed to practice in alignment with their medical training and professional ethics.

I know you share in my care for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you **OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480 today**. You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should be made between **ONLY** the patients, their doctors, and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Graeson Martuneac [he/him] 53714

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Tony Jennaro, and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for over 30 years and I have worked in public education as a teacher and leader for the past decade.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because they cause irreparable harm on Trans individuals, particularly Trans youth across our state. Trans folks have always existed and will continue to exist in spite of these efforts. However these bills would seek to eliminate access to life saving and affirming care for decisive political purposes. I have come to know many trans youth in my work as an educator and the decisions they make in concert with their families and medical professionals for gender affirming care are essential to their mental and physical health. This egregious political overreach also contradicts all the parental rights and arguments for individual freedom that conservative politicians are claiming they support. This takes away parental rights to decide medical care for their children and imposed unnecessary and harmful government intervention on individual freedoms. This frankly shows the hypocrisy of WI Republican legislators, this is not governing, these are political games being played over people's lives.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Tony Jennaro

Madison, WI 53704

LOCAL 1473

United Food & Commercial Workers Union
5200 W. Loomis Road · Greendale WI 53129
website · ufcw1473.org email · info@ufcw1473.org



Jake Bailey • *President*

Melanie Bartholf • *Secretary-Treasurer*

October 12, 2023

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

The United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1473 represents 10,000 hardworking union members across Wisconsin in the industries of grocery, food processing, meat packing, and health care.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. At UFCW we know that gender-affirming health care SAVES LIVES. If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

Politicians should not interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

LGBTQ+ rights are human rights and gender-affirming care saves lives.

I urge you to vote NO on SB 479 and SB 480.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Melanie Bartholf'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Melanie Bartholf
Secretary-Treasurer
UFCW Local 1473

TO: Senate Committee on Health
FROM: Sreejita Patra
DATE: 10/11/2023
RE: Testimony in opposition to SB 480

My name is Sreejita Patra, a freshman student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison under jurisdiction of the state law of Wisconsin. I am writing this testimony to urge the committee to oppose SB 480; I believe in the moral duty of medical advancement to aid those conditions which can be helped in patients, including those under 18 seeking a type of affirming care.

I was nine years old when I began puberty, the horrors of which are crystalized in memory all these years later. I still remember the confused comments from other children on why marks were beginning to form on my face, or my sputtering inability to answer why I always missed swim practice once a month. But the most egregious crime committed against me, by a body which was going places my brain was frantically pleading not to yet visit, was the formation of developed breast tissue and curves. Almost overnight, basic child-friendly tank tops and shorts became objects of danger and scrutiny. My body was foreign to me, viewed and critiqued at the discretion of ignorant adults, peers, and society. It was a loss of the original innocence, and had I been a dysphoric individual, or had some form of macromastia, I am almost certain I would have successfully taken my life.

SB 480 makes it impossible for an entire sect of people to benefit from healthcare's fundamental purpose: to treat conditions with modern resources where patients were historically bereft by the limitation of medical advancement. If SB 480 is passed, both transgender and cisgender children with a wide range of bodily and mental discrepancies will suffer needlessly. They will receive no benefit from readily available, highly effective medical treatment in the form of puberty blockers, mastectomies, and a wealth of other procedures. It is traveling back in time, and it will be the result of a repugnant, anti-scientific bill which refuses to consider the complexities of biological/psychological development and the tenuous nature of diagnostic "severity".

I would once again like to reiterate my opposition to SB 480, and to thank the committee for taking the time to listen to my testimony. I urge our legislators to defer to scientific and medical authority in deciding when minors should be treated with gender-affirming care, so that all children in Wisconsin may have the inalienable right to security in their minds and bodies.

Good morning, Members of the Senate Committee on Health, Senator Cabral-Guevera, Senator Testin, Senator Felzkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, and Senator Carpenter,

I, Sarah Chenoweth, am a community member in Madison. I have lived here for 6 months and am a family member to LGBTQ individuals.

I care about this bill because I love my trans family and understand that they have known who they are from the earliest ages. Their bodies are their own. Their lives are their own.

As a member of this community, **I urge you to vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480** as they are likely to cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I know you share in my care for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you **OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480 today**. You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Sarah Chenoweth
Madison
53711

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Erica and I have lived in Southern Wisconsin for most of my life. My spouse and I chose Madison to raise our children because we value the community and opportunities we hope that this city and Wisconsin can provide us.

I am writing to urge you to vote **NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480**. As a Wisconsinite, it is infuriating to see some of our legislators insisting on spending time on bigoted and harmful bills, attacking people who exist outside a socially-constructed gender-binary. There is a crisis in our state around caring for our kids - underinvestment in the childcare sector, in education, in healthcare, in mental health. I cannot fathom the point in wasting time on legislation that deliberately harms some of our most vulnerable kids. This legislation aims to make them unsafe and feel unwelcome; it does active harm. It shows that Wisconsin is not safe for people like my brother, who was born and raised here but did not stay, in part because of legislation like this that intends to make it unsafe for him to exist here.

If passed, these bills will cost lives - they would threaten people like my brother. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

Moreover, our legislators should not take any action that would discourage health care providers from practicing in Wisconsin. SB 479 will have a chilling effect on bringing and retaining much-needed providers to Wisconsin. I already have to schedule out 18 months for well-child visits for my kids -- we must ensure Wisconsin is a welcoming, safe, and supportive place for providers to offer all necessary healthcare, including the full spectrum of care for LGBTQIA+ individuals.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Erica Jessen
Madison

Good morning, Members of the Senate Committee on Health, Senator Cabral-Guevera, Senator Testin, Senator Felzkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, and Senator Carpenter,

My name is Jeanne Lydon. I am a registered voter in the Town of Sun Prairie. I have lived here for 17 years and have family and friends who are LGBTQ.

I care about this bill because I believe all people should have the right to make health care decisions for themselves and their children as they see fit. Gender affirming care is life saving care. Medical professionals are required by training, and by conscience to provide appropriate medical care in the best interest of their patients. Health care is a private matter between patients and health care providers, and, in the case of minors, their parents.

As a member of this community, **I urge you to vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480** as they are likely to

... cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

... negatively impact the well-being of my community members. It is already difficult enough to access medical care. Please do not add unnecessary challenges to families of transgender individuals.

... cause medical providers in areas where there are already too few, to leave the state for areas where they are allowed to practice in alignment with their medical training and professional ethics.

I know you share in my care for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you **OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480 today**. You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Jeanne Lydon 53559

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Cailin, and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 24 years and am a college graduate with friends who are transgender and nonbinary.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because they are hateful, they will lead to higher rates of suicide among trans youth, and they are deeply discriminatory. These bills are also, despite claims to the contrary, deeply un-Christian and politically motivated.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Cailin Maertz

Madison, 53704

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Joseph Epperson. I am a resident of Darien, WI, municipality 64-004. I have lived in Wisconsin for 1 years.

I am writing you to URGE you to vote NO on senate bills 479 and 480.

If we were true Americans we would not be hand cuffing our medical professionals and keeping them from helping the people that need it most, our youth. We would give people the freedom to be themselves and we would support them in doing so.

This care is necessary for our transgender youths mental health. It's bad enough they are trapped in a body that does not feel like their own. Now they want us to tell them it's against the law for a medical professional to treat them as our modern medicine has proven effective.

We as a nation are called on to trust our medical professionals with issues like covid, but we don't trust them on gender issues? I guess when political views get crossed with religious views the 12 years of school to become a doctor are null and void because a priest says so.

I hope you all as a representative of myself, neighbors and community vote NO on these bills and give our youth a fighting chance. Lets show them we care about their well being. VOTE NO FOR US, VOTE NO FOR THE YOUTH.

Joseph F. Epperson
64-004,53114

My name is Olga. I'm a trans woman who's lived on the border of Minnesota and Wisconsin all her life. I now live in Minneapolis but have many family and friends who live in Wisconsin.

I have my own personal, moral and statistical reasons for opposing these bills, but I think it's worth looking at them from a perspective I don't see as much in regards to trans rights, and that is in regards to freedom, independence, and autonomy. These are fundamental American values, and while we are by no means perfect in respect to them, they are ones we should always strive toward. In this respect, I can't think of anything less American than the government telling us what gender we are, what we can or can't do with our bodies, and what names we are or aren't allowed to use. We're not cattle, and I won't let the ear tag you stuck to me at birth define who I am as a woman and an American.

From the ages of 14 - 19 I tried many times to work up the courage to come out to my friends and family, but the shame was too powerful, and I decided that it may be better to either just kill or exile myself away from the people I loved. But I lived, and a year later came out publically, and have never felt more alive. I felt so much regret knowing that I wasted my youth in isolated suicidality.

Imagining a world where I did work up the courage to be myself, to try and medically transition, only to be told it was against the law, most likely would have spiraled me into a much worse place than I ever reached. In my case, I at least knew I had the option, and that option kept me going. It gave me the incentive to give living as a man a shot, knowing that if it got too bad I could stop, rather than just ending it all there. As a teenager going through puberty, a year is a lifetime, and withholding bodily autonomy in regards to puberty blockers is a moral crime. Did you know that the average regret rate for trans teens is under 3%? That's less than the regret rate for knee surgery, at around 12%. And these are changes that, barring surgeries, are mostly reversible.

Everything you've been told about us is a lie. These are truly life saving drugs and procedures, and while I get to now more or less live my life as a contented woman rather than a miserable man, being allowed to transition as a youth would have made me much safer and much happier by and large. You have to understand that the time we spend as trans people waiting in shame for our surroundings to be less hostile so we can finally be who we know we are is wasted life. It's life spent in agony and resentment when we could be living authentically and fulfilled. Every law you pass that denies trans freedom is another pained and resentful child you bring up in this world. The void that is created by denied personhood is a hard one to fill, and you will have to live with the reality that many kids over the years will die as a result of these bills. That is not an appeal to emotion, that is a fact.

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Health,

Please vote "no" and discontinue any further movement on Senate Bill 480. Please consider putting the safety of Moms like me, and kids like mine, first, before political party lines and attention-seeking ploys.

Me and my kids are regular people who just want to wake up, go to school, smile a lot and be healthy, happy, caring citizens. Constantly checking our emails and watching the news each day to see how little we matter to you is exhausting.

My husband and I are tax payers, volunteers, hard workers and generous humans. We are all tired of fighting for our basic human rights. Please do your jobs and move all this misguided energy into protecting the elderly, saving our farms and keeping our water clean, all real issues regarding health in Wisconsin.

Sincerely,
Amelia McConnell
Oregon, WI 53575

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Bob, and I am a resident of Wisconsin. I've lived here for 38 years, and was born and raised here.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because these bills are blatant hate speech and oppression wrapped under the guise of being a law. These bills are motivated by hatred and oppression, and serve only to cause harm to marginalized groups.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Bob

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Joanne Mehlhaff, and I am a resident of Rochester, Wisconsin. I've lived in Wisconsin for 52 years and I have a transgender son.

I am writing to urge you to vote **NO** on Senate Bills 479 and 480. If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQIA youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

I appreciate the chance to share my story about the most courageous person I know.

My trans son would not be where he is today without the family support and the gender affirming care that he has received. To know that a bill exists to hinder any trans youth from receiving the care they need makes me incredibly sad and angry.

Trans youth deserve adults that advocate for them; not adults who try to put into place laws that take away their rights for care. Laws that are prohibiting Trans youth from being their true selves.

Gender dysphoria is complicated and just as diabetes needs an endocrinologist and sometimes insulin to treat its symptoms ; gender dysphoria requires gender affirming care and sometimes hormone therapy to treat its symptoms. Blocking this care can have dire consequences.

I am unaware of the suicide rate among trans youth in this country, a statistic does not matter. One suicide precipitated by gender dysphoria is too many suicides. My son fortunately started with care before he made any attempts on his life.

As a young child my son was talkative and fun. He would create a stage on our coffee table and sing for us. He smiled all the time and ran at life full force. Then, as puberty started, he pulled into himself. He was still loving and caring, but no longer seemed to want to participate in life anymore. He was a teenager, I thought that is what happens. You want to stay in your room and brood about everything. I remember that time in life even though it was a long time ago. What was happening to him was not teenage angst. This was so much more. I watched as he faded away from his former self. I cried because I had no idea how to help. I could see him in there, but I could tell he could not see himself.

One day he came to me and shared how he was feeling. He explained that he felt lost in a female body, he felt disconnected and ashamed of it. Things had spiraled to a place he was becoming afraid of. He had thoughts of suicide. He needed help in traveling down a road that we did not have a map for.

Doctors helped us create that map. We sought help and started puberty blockers to relieve him of the monthly curse that to most is an annoyance but to him was almost soul crushing. It did not just feel wrong because of physical symptoms but was wrong at a psychological level that I did not understand.

Knowing that he had thoughts of suicide and had self-harming behaviors was very devastating as a parent. I am a fortunate parent. I still have my son because our state has a gender clinic to help support him.

Sharing with us how he felt and living in his truth was just the beginning. With the help of the clinic and a therapist we had our child back. He started to become that kid that participated in life again. I saw him smile again and heard him laugh for the first time in a long time.

I will forever be grateful that our state supports our LGBTQIA community and that there was no law that took the right to start care away when it was necessary.

If we had to wait for care until my son was over eighteen, I would not be celebrating my incredible son. I would be mourning the loss of my child.

Thank you for taking the time to read about my real life experience with gender affirming care.

I hope you can understand what having the right to choose this care for my son has meant to me. You could be saving a life with your vote.

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

I, Rain Fernandez, strongly appose SB 479 and SB 480. I am a 16 year old who has lived in Keshena, Wisconsin for my entire life. I fear for the mental health of those who these bills would affect including myself. As young people we need to know that our senate cares about our lives and health. I plead with you to think of the people that you will be impacting with your decision.

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Anne Perry and I live in Madison, WI. I have been a resident of Wisconsin for 31 years. This testimony is in opposition to bills SB 479 and SB 480. As a licensed professional counselor in the community, the proposed bill does not align with WPATH and international standards of care, research, or clinical expertise. All kids deserve access to the health care they need to live their healthiest, happiest, and most fulfilled lives. Gender-affirming care is listening to, understanding, and supporting transgender/nonbinary young people and their families. This includes both mental health care and medical care. It is specialized care provided by teams with training and expertise in evidence-based care, just like any other pediatric specialty provided to children.

We know that gender affirming care is lifesaving. Trans and nonbinary people suffer disproportionately from suicidality and other mental health issues. According to a survey by the Trevor Project of over 40,000 LGBTQ+ youth ages 13 to 24, over 60% of trans and nonbinary youth reported engaging in self-harm and 52% had seriously considered suicide in the past year- which is far above national averages. The care medical professionals provide and the process they follow with each family is backed by every major medical and mental health organization in this country and the world. We call upon lawmakers to introduce legislation to promote the health, well-being, and safety of transgender and gender-diverse youth.

Sincerely,

Anne Perry

Madison, WI (53718)

I am Peter Tarson, a high school student and close friend to many families directly impacted by the bill SB480, which would ban transgender minors from physically transitioning. I would like to beg Wisconsin to refrain from passing this bill lest it deny people so dear to me their humanity, belonging, and safety in public.

I understand that you wish to protect people by restricting transgender healthcare. But you are not protecting people, only an image of them, an image that causes them to squirm in falsehood. It frightens you to understand a child's nausea at a chest that is false for your internal God-woven beauty, to feel the needle bristle violation of facial hair, to feel a skirt that throws you behind waves of overwhelm. The feeling you feel when you imagine if you had transitioned is the feeling they feel every day they do not have trans healthcare.

You've already heard many speakers who have detransitioned share their experiences, their needs to alter their bodies again to find themselves and their struggles with a binary transition understanding. I understand the impulse to, holding this anguish, see it as the only anguish and not hold space for the endless contradictory realities of all peoples' genders and truths. But less than one in twenty trans people detransition due to any change in desired physical body from when they transitioned. That's right. One in twenty. Dysphoria for people does not "go away" in adulthood, it is something people resign themselves to through waves of powerlessness and fear of sharing their truths. The only way we can build a society in which all people do not have to hide themselves behind layers of pain is to affirm and celebrate all of these people, whether they transition to one gender or want to transition back or elsewhere. We must continue to allow and develop transition so that all humans can build the contradictory, ever-changing bodies that are affirming to them, trans and detrans, and post-trans, and transhuman. We must not hide people beneath natal sex frameworks, or any framework that denies humanity's endless beauty.

To admit that transgender people deserve medical care and affirmation is to accept God's offering, enumerated repeatedly throughout the scriptures, that we may share in the act of creation. We become close to Him by embracing our mental capacity to build and discover His love in the world. How else was it when St. Peter founded the Church in Rome and Antioch or Abraham traveled across Mesopotamia? How can we forget this? Will we not build our bodies, words, and minds as His temple by celebrating how they connect us to others and our inner truths? To ban transgender medical care is to force our children into a Miltonian Pandaemonium, where their bodies pressed into a mold of volcanic mercury that standardizes and regiments.

To allow children to reforge their bodies in the image of their inner beauty, to explore the endless layers, contradictions, and flowerings of the truth of their genders, is to relinquish control and embrace the fact that people's inner poetries, narratives, discoveries are inextricable from their bodily, tender vulnerability. It is an admission that the pain that they experience is real, that invisible powerlessness can be worthy of love and care and that our knowledge and creativity are worthy of crafting their inner palaces. You aim to restrict neurodivergent minors from transitioning to hide their inner beauty and capacity to author themselves, to escape from the reality that all minds as well as all bodies can create harmony through their truest expressions. I am neurodivergent myself and have faced medical consent violation around it, and I am horrified by this. Not because I hate any of you, but because I see the beauty that, by repressing others, you aim to repress in yourselves.

I understand that the inherent duality of vulnerability in oneself and authority over one's voice and truth is terrifying. We fear for our children and long to protect them, but denying them the right to access medical care, reducing it to fixed definitions of what bodies and experiences are real, is deeply harmful. We fear what will happen if we reveal our own needs to transgress, to feel the love we all wish we could and craft the wonders we all long to create. But I urge you to release into your fear and into the community of thousands of trans people who are calling for humanity, not to be cast into the shadows and

Good morning, Members of the Senate Committee on Health, Senator Cabral-Guevera, Senator Testin, Senator Felzkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, and Senator Carpenter,

I, Kayley Wolenberg, am a registered voter and community member in Madison. I have lived here for just over a year, work at the American Family Children's Hospital in Madison, and am an ally to the LGBTQ+ community.

I care about this bill/measure because I believe that a person is never too young to know their true selves; laws should not impose on someone's bodily autonomy—even if they are children—as these are decisions that should be between doctors and the children's families, not lawmakers who do not have medical degrees.

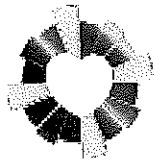
As a member of this community, **I urge you to vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480** as they are likely to severely harm lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I know you share in my care for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you **OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480 today**. You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Kayley Wolenberg
Madison, WI 53717



**Middleton
Community
Church** UCC

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Zayna Thomley. I was born in and raised in the state of Wisconsin and currently reside in Madison where I am the pastor at Middleton Community Church. I am also a partner, a mother, a lover the Wisconsin Northwoods, and a keeper of chickens. But most of all, I am committed to creating a world that is more just, kind, and generous for all people – especially our children.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because I value the lives of our Queer Youth, especially those who are Trans and Nonbinary. If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Zayna Thomley
Middleton Community United Church of Christ

To the Senate Committee on Health:

Amy Lyle
Mt. Horeb, WI 53572

Wednesday, October 12, 2023

Opposition to AB 480

I'm coming to you today as the parent of a trans daughter, asking you not to take away my child or any child's access to life-saving health care.

My husband and I have lived in Wisconsin for over 25 years. Wisconsin is our home.

This is one of the most extreme political attacks on transgender people in recent memory. Not only does it display a fundamental lack of understanding of transgender children it appears to criminalize best practice medical care for transgender children which is backed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, and other leading medical authorities.

Medical decisions are best left to the patients, their families, and their health care providers in accordance with medical best practices. Politicians shouldn't interfere in these decisions.

Research shows that transgender youth whose families support their gender identity have a 52% decrease in suicidal thoughts, a 48% decrease in suicide attempts and a significant increase in self-esteem and general health.

According to the Trevor Project 2023 National Youth Survey, 41% of LGBTQ+ young people seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year - and young people who are transgender, nonbinary, and/or people of color reported higher rates than their peers.

Additionally, nearly 1 in 3 LGBTQ+ young people said their mental health was poor most of the time or always **due to the anti-LGBTQ+ policies and legislation.**

Authors of this bill claim that health care is harming my child when evidence shows the opposite. Health care *saves* my child and your proposed legislation is what is actually causing harm.

Members of the committee - I am asking you, as a parent, to please vote against SB 480 and allow my child and other children continued access to life-saving health care.

Thank you.

Dear Committee Members,

I write today to express my unequivocal opposition to SB 479 and SB 480 which would ban all forms of gender affirming care for minors in Wisconsin and allow doctors who provide that care to be sued.

Gender affirming care is life saving. It is recognized and guided by medical organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association and the American Psychological Association.

These bills would put politicians in the role of medical experts - which they most certainly are not. These bills would insert politicians in the middle of the sacred relationship between doctors and their patients. They would infringe on the most basic of our rights as Americans - the right to privacy and to bodily autonomy.

There is extremely strong scientific and medical consensus that transgender people exist and that transition-related care is clinically appropriate and medically necessary. This position is backed by the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Psychological Association, and others. Study after study shows that people who have access to gender affirming care have better mental and physical health, higher school achievement, and reduced rates of suicide.

I urge you to vote against SB 479, SB 480 and any other efforts to withhold or politicize the medical treatment of trans youth and adults. Leave medical decisions to those qualified to make them - patients and their doctors.

Sincerely,

Kaja Nunez
N6006 S. Farmington Rd
Helenville, WI 53137

To committee addressing Bill 479 and 480

I'm Tristan Blaschka, I live in Wausau WI. I'm not in support of the bills because if I were still in school and receiving gender affirming care or in sports I'd be affected. Both of things I wish were a reality for me when I was younger but they were out of reach because of financial reasons, physical disability and lack of family support. I'd like to hear about bills that don't tell people how to live their lives when no one is getting hurt. These bills are a waste of time and are weapons, they will literally take lives if passed. Please do better and leave social issues and religion out of politics!

When I was younger I was scared to come out. I had to educate myself about transitioning because I was too scared to reach out. I've known who I was prior to age 5 and nothing has changed besides my knowledge on transgender studies. Throughout my school years I was super depressed believing I was just suffering because of my living conditions. I didn't feel safe coming out to my mom because she made fun of transgender people when they were on tv. When I was in highschool I've done so much research on transgender people that I've probably had more information than anyone putting these cruel bills on the table! I've been picked on so much because I always have been more masculine than my female peers. Anyways in 2021 I spent the entire year making sure this is the real me. During that year I went back and forth between trying to picture myself as feminine and masculine. Everytime I tried to picture myself as feminine I felt super depressed and uncomfortable. The answer should've been obvious, like seriously I spent at least 20 years having to picture myself as masculine to feel comfortable. So December 16 2021 I took my first testosterone shot and within a month I felt happy to be myself. Prior to December 16th 2021 I wouldn't have cared if my life would've been taken from me. I actually love the way I look, before I rarely looked at myself in the mirror. My self confidence has skyrocketed and I don't care what anyone has to say about myself. Although the general public sees me as the gender I identify as. My depression has gotten better and I haven't needed the assistance of antidepressants up until someone in my family chewed me out for planning my top surgery. If I can no longer take my hormones or get my top surgery I won't be doing ok. I seriously will have a hard time existing.

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Carol Feuerstein and I am a resident of Mequon for the past 30 years. I am a family physician, and I've worked in Milwaukee for the past 32 years. As part of my practice, I've been privileged to care for many transgender people. For some of my transgender patients, I am their primary care physician and for some, I provide their gender affirming care. In every situation, providing gender affirming care improves the person's overall health, including their mental health and ability to thrive in life. Everyone deserves to have the appropriate health care. Providing gender affirming care is no different than providing appropriate care for someone with diabetes, cancer, or dementia.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because I do not believe the government belongs in between the patient and the physician. Good health care cannot be legislated.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Carol Feuerstein
Mequon, WI 53092

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Anna Knapp and I am a resident of Liberty Grove. I've lived in Wisconsin for the last 13 years and grew up right here on the family farm where I currently live with my husband and 2 daughters. I am a parent of a transgender teenager who is currently under the care of an excellent doctor for her gender dysphoria. My daughter has been seeing this doctor for over 10 years and our entire family of 4 as well as extended family--aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins who also live and vote here in Wisconsin--are extremely happy with the life saving results that my daughter has experienced.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because these bills discriminate against transgender individuals. I can tell you from a family who lives this reality that my daughter being able to get the healthcare that she needs has made a significant difference in her mental health. Before her transitioning care, she was not a person who felt good about herself. Her mental health was not good. Now that she has this care under a doctor, she is confident and emotionally healthy. She is physically healthy too because she is active on girls' sports teams. I have never questioned that this was life saving care for her.

She is currently transitioning and if this bill passes, what will that mean for her? That her life saving medical care has to stop? I don't want to imagine that future for her at all. Because we'll be right back where we were before with the person who does not have good mental health which will lead to poor physical health as well.

These medical decisions should be left to patients, families, and healthcare providers. They are the ones that know best about what is appropriate and necessary. We should also be listening to the medical providers in our own country when writing our bills. Nowhere in SB 479 do it mention what medical organizations in our country recommend. We should be listening to the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Medical Association who support best practice medical care for transgender youth which simply delays puberty for young people. This bill aims to take away their choices and tries to prevent them from having the chance to live as the gender they know they are inside.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,
Anna Knapp
Ellison Bay, WI 54210
Township of Liberty Grove

Good morning, members of the Senate Committee on Health:
Senator Cabral-Guevera, Senator Testin, Senator Felzkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, and Senator Carpenter,

I, Christine Milovani, am a registered voter in the Town of Perry. I have lived here for 16 years and am a business owner and health care provider. I also have family members, friends, neighbors and clients that are part of the LGBTQIA+ community.

I care about this bill because as part of my profession I am ethically bound to uphold the worth and dignity of each person that I treat. Bills 479 and 480 are not in alignment with that ethic and will cause harm to my professional integrity and my willingness to practice in the State of Wisconsin.

As a member of this community, **I urge you to vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480** as they are likely to

... cost lives. At a time when LGBTQIA+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

... negatively impact the well-being of my community members. It is already difficult enough to access medical care. Please do not add unnecessary challenges to families of transgender individuals.

... cause medical providers in areas where there are already too few, to leave the state for areas where they are allowed to practice in alignment with their medical training and professional ethics.

I know you share in my care for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you **OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480 today**. You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Thank you for your time, consideration and action in opposing these two bills.

Sincerely,

Christine Milovani, LCSW
Mount Horeb, WI 53572

Dear Committee on Health,

My name is Christina Koch, and I live in Madison, Wisconsin.

As someone who cares about the safety and well-being of my neighbors, I oppose SB 479 and SB 480. Everyone deserves safe, quality healthcare. This bill strips away that right for transgender people and will result in worse health outcomes for the trans community. This bill also dangerously sets a precedent that government officials, not health professionals, set the standard for what health care should be, a disastrous approach that will cause harm for ALL of us.

If you care about your own health and that of your neighbors, vote against SB 479 and 480.

Best,
Christina Koch

Good morning, Members of the Senate Committee on Health, Senator Cabral-Guevera, Senator Testin, Senator Felzkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, and Senator Carpenter,

I, Julie Nyquist, am a registered voter/neighbor/community member in Madison. I have lived here for 21 years and am a business owner and healthcare provider to people here, including adult and youth members of the LGBTQ community.

I care about this bill/measure because I believe healthcare decisions are between a family and their physicians.

As a member of this community, **I urge you to vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480** as they are likely to

... cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

... negatively impact the well-being of my community members. It is already difficult enough to access medical care. Please do not add unnecessary challenges to families of transgender individuals.

... cause medical providers in areas where there are already too few, to leave the state for areas where they are allowed to practice in alignment with their medical training and professional ethics.

... limit my ability to give referrals for care that my patients deserve and are looking for.

I know you share in my care for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you **OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480 today**. You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Julie Nyquist, 53718

Good evening Members of the Senate Committee on Health, Senator Cabral-Guevera, Senator Testin, Senator Felzkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, and Senator Carpenter,

My name is Ignacio Feria and I am a mental health therapist living in the Eken Park neighborhood in Madison, WI. I urge you to vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480 as they are likely to literally cost lives. I know you share in my care for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480 today. You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely, Ignacio Feria, MSW LCSW, 53704



October 11, 2023

Dear Honored Members of the Wisconsin Senate Committee on Health:

PFLAG is a nonprofit which originated in 1972. A mom decided to march next to her kiddo with a sign that said, "I love my gay son." Since that time PFLAG has become a national organization. Its mission is to create a caring, just, and affirming world for LGBTQIA people and those who love them. We established PFLAG Cambridge in October of 2019 to further promote this mission at a local level through eastern Dane and western Jefferson counties. We write to you today as constituents and as PFLAG members.

The world does not treat our LGBTQIA loved ones fairly. The bills known as SB 480 (a medical care ban) and SB 479 (allowing doctors who provide gender affirming care to be subject to civil action) are stark examples of how transgender people, who already face so many hardships, are treated unfairly based on their transgender identity. Allowing for this unfair discrimination creates further hardships for our loved ones. And for that reason we ask that you vote against these bills.

Discriminatory actions cause additional hardship for the people targeted. Denying medical care, and worse, attempting to scare medical professionals from providing gender affirming care, is discrimination. The harm this discrimination causes is quantifiable and unacceptable. GLSEN, the Gay, Lesbian, & Straight Education Network, is an organization founded in 1990 which has been gathering data on the safety of LGBTQIA youth in school and their safety for over 20 years. According to their 2021 biannual survey 68.0% of LGBTQ+ students felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression characteristics— 50.6% because of their sexual orientation, 43.2% because of their gender expression, and 40.3% because of their gender (<https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/NSCS-2021-Full-Report.pdf>). According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Transgender individuals are nearly four times as likely to experience a mental health condition. NAMI further states that forty percent of transgender adults have attempted suicide. (<https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Identity-and-Cultural-Dimensions/LGBTQ>).

Discriminatory actions have real world results. These bills communicate to every transgender person in Wisconsin that the people elected to protect us see them as less than whole, and not worth the same protection and respect as their peers. We strongly urge you to vote against the bills known as SB 480 (a medical care ban) and SB 479 (allowing doctors who provide gender affirming care to be subject to civil action).

Sincerely,
PFLAG Cambridge

Good morning, Members of the Senate Committee on Health, Senator Cabral-Guevera, Senator Testin, Senator Felzkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, and Senator Carpenter,

I, Jennifer Schroeder, am a registered voter/neighbor/community member in Madison, WI. I have lived here for 24 years and am a

- o Member of the LGBTQ community
- o Parent
- oo An educator
- o A person of faith
- o A healthcare provide
- o

I care about this bill/measure because gender affirming care should be accessible to all and providers should be able to practice medicine without fear of retaliation.

As a member of this community, I urge you to vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480 as they are likely to

... cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

... negatively impact the well-being of my community members. It is already difficult enough to access medical care. Please do not add unnecessary challenges to families of transgender individuals.

... cause medical providers in areas where there are already too few, to leave the state for areas where they are allowed to practice in alignment with their medical training and professional ethics.

I know you share in my care for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480 today. You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Jennifer Schroeder
53704

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Emily Smith and I am a resident of Madison. I oppose SB 480.

I've known and loved many trans people over the course of my life. I first learned about transness in 5th grade when a friend of mine shared that he was a boy and that he would be transitioning to live according to his gender identity. As he experienced gender milestones that were important to him - being called by the name he chose for himself, a lower voice as a result of hormone treatment, his first facial hair - it was abundantly clear to me that these milestones brought both joy and relief. Joy that he could see himself in a body he recognized as his own. Relief that he no longer had to experience that particular aspect of gender dysphoria.

Dysphoria, discrimination, and general lack of acceptance all contribute to trans youth experiencing more mental illness and suicide than their cis peers. The Trevor Project's 2022 Youth Mental Health Survey found that more than 56% of trans and non-binary youth in Wisconsin have seriously considered suicide in the last year. These youth need our acceptance and our care, not to have their bodily autonomy removed and their access to medical care revoked.

I currently teach a class of high school freshmen and sophomores that includes a trans boy. I want him to be able to access the same life saving, gender affirming medical care my childhood friend received. Please do not pass this bill that would eliminate his ability to do so. Please do not remove the bodily autonomy of some of our most vulnerable youth. Please act from a place of care and acceptance.

Sincerely,
Emily Smith
Madison, 53711

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Eyrekr Rika Wiemer, and I am a resident of Waukesha. I've lived in Wisconsin for 48 years and my son is transgender.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because they serve no purpose. There is no outcry for SB 479. There is feigned outrage based on lies.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families. In my case, medical decisions were made after a litany of discussions from a team of caregivers & our family. No government should interfere with my parental rights or threaten the medical community that provides these services.

Sincerely,
Eyrekr Wiemer
Waukesha 53188

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Jamie Hawkins and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 9 years and I am a parent to two young children.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because we need to support all families and their right to choose the care that is best for them. I want to share some more about my family and the ways in which these bills, especially Bill 480, could impact my child.

When my now 4 year old was born, she, like all babies, could not talk. She could not tell us what she wanted her name to be or what her gender identity is. She didn't even have the words to tell us what her genitalia was. So we, like all parents, took a look at her and gave her the name we chose. The gender we thought she was based on the genitalia we could see. To us our daughter was a boy. We used he/him pronouns and named him based on a male character from a book we loved. When my child was old enough to gain the language of gender she told us she is a girl. She told her teachers she is a girl, she told her friends. She told strangers and acquaintances. There was no questioning it in her mind. She was not confused. She was certain. We thought maybe she would grow out of it, because she was, well... so little! However, when she was three months shy of turning four she clearly and decisively told us that she wants us to use she/her pronouns. She, not he/him. She is a girl, a sister, a daughter. Again, she was not confused. She was certain and she still is.

Now I cannot tell you what comes next, over the next eight to 10 years as my daughter begins to hit puberty and have to reckon with the changes her body is going to make. I do not know. What I do know is that I want her to have the choice to manage all of the changes in a way that feels best to her and best for our family. I want to be able to continue to work with my very supportive pediatrician to access the care that she needs.

When I listened to the house speak last week about the so-called "Help Not Harm" bill I heard a question that misconstrued what occurs when accessing gender affirming care for children. No my 4 year old will not begin medical treatments at this age, no my teenager will not immediately go in for gender affirming surgeries. What my young teen may need is support both medically and emotionally. She will need to

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Eyrekr Rika Wiemer. I live in Waukesha WI. My husband & I raised our child here who is now living in Minnesota. I oppose SB 480.

When our child came out as transgender 10 years ago I was so frightened by how my life would change and my lack of control over any of it. I worried what people would say about me as a parent, worried he would kill himself while we tried to wrap our heads around this, worried I was not strong enough. I questioned why this was happening to us. Why would God do this when we did everything right? He was a planned baby, we were Christians, I volunteered in his classroom & at school functions. I even taught Sunday school for years. None of that protected or prepared us. For 3 years prior, we watched this sweet happy kid slowly turn isolated & sad, wanting to die rather than live as his assigned gender.

The only thing I could do once my ego was completely empty, was arm myself with knowledge. And we took it all in: TedTalks, and YouTube, and counselors, and so many different doctors, and books, research papers, studies, and history lessons. We drank in all the knowledge available. My husband shared with me that only a very small percentage of ppl change their minds after coming out, even kids. And he kept pushing me to see what was in front of us, despite my fear. We needed to save our kid. There was no other option.

Then, being me, I dug my heels in and project managed our journey, for 3 more years. None of it was easy, not a single moment. The process is made purposely expensive & hard to navigate & humiliating & utterly exhausting. And this is my perspective. Can you imagine how my kid felt? Countless appointments and follow-up blood work to monitor his levels. Therapy & diagnosis before any consideration of treatment. Adjustments when needed always necessitated trips to Children's Hospital nearby.

Comparatively speaking though, we had it easy. We have a loving, supportive home, schools were supportive, we had money for transition expenses. We had insurance for therapy & doctor appointments. We could pay for his care out of pocket when insurance didn't cover it. Which begs the question of the necessity of a ban on transition related care if my insurance provides coverage. I have rights as a parent to seek care & treatment for my child, especially when there is no cost or detriment to others.

The vast majority of folks do not have these privileges however. Multiply my experience by the thousands of other families and kids going through this, then add the magnitude of disparities in access to supportive services & financial means. You get a better picture of the community, and our daily dismay. I understand that is the real purpose of these bills, to ensure this community doesn't feel welcome.

To me, these headlines, these bills, are nothing more than hyperbolic arguments meant to willfully distort or outright lie about the transgender experience, biology, science, and history. The rights & dignities of the transgender (or intersex) person is deemed less valuable because of some perceived cisgender inequities. It trivializes the people I love to their genitalia. It trivializes & discounts the difficulties of my family's journey. And the underlying current is that cisgender people are more deserving of privilege because they have the right genitalia.

In seeking knowledge over the years, I dug into history and found correlation. We annihilate what we fear, that which is different or challenges our own perceived 'special' class. Jew, Japanese, Black, Indigenous, Disabled, Gay, Muslim, Immigrant, and now Transgender. We hide our fear behind feigned outrage, casting the others as dangerous, unclean, deviant, ready to rape our women, steal our daughters, molest them in bathrooms. Under the guise of "safety" or religion, Blacks couldn't use the same bathrooms as Whites. Japanese were dangerous enough to warrant internment camps after Pearl Harbor. Forced conversion therapy for gays. All horrible examples of rhetoric turned violent, inflicted upon the marginalized. History goes on and on and on, repeating the same tune.

I carry all of this with me, every day. When my child came out, I was changed irrevocably. I am convicted by my compassion for this community and by extension, other marginalized communities.

I will not acquiesce. This proposed bill is based on lies. And I will fight for every family who cannot bring their voice to this committee.

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Rev. Gayle Tucker, and I am a resident of Madison. I grew up in Wisconsin and moved back here a little more than two years ago. I moved back to Wisconsin because this is my home. I love this state. I returned to this state to teach after finishing my undergraduate degree, and only left to attend seminary, which was not a possibility here. I looked for ministry positions in Wisconsin, but was not able to find one. After serving as pastor to a congregation in Chicago for more than a decade, I am happy to be back home.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a proud Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because they, effectively, make hatred law. As a person of faith and as ordained clergy, I believe it is our responsibility, as community, to do our best to love and care for all our neighbors, but particularly for those whose voices are frequently silenced or disregarded. Children and youth, especially LGBTQIA+ children and youth, are all too frequently silenced or ignored, even when trying to speak up for themselves.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin. We should be doing all we can to support youth, empowering them to embrace who they are, and to work with their families and their doctors to make appropriate and life-affirming decisions about their physical and mental healthcare. If passed, these bills would take away the personal agency of children and youth patients, their doctors, and their families. Further, it would communicate to trans and gender non-conforming kids and youth that they are lesser people, simply because of who they are, and that they are not deserving of choices regarding the care of their own bodies. Those are dangerous, potentially deadly, messages to send.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families. Please vote NO on these hateful bills.

Sincerely,
Reverend Gayle Tucker
Madison, 53704

Dear members of the WI Senate Committee on Health -

I'm writing to express my opposition to Senate bills 479 and 480.

I've struggled with gender dysphoria my entire life. I've memories of it as early as age 3 or 4, this was well before the internet, and it didn't go away. Two years ago, I finally decided to try gender affirming care and the results have been nothing short of extraordinary. I'm comfortable in my own skin for the first time in a very, very long time and cannot imagine going back.

Gender dysphoria is real and gender affirming care saves lives. These decisions should be left to Wisconsin families and their physicians. The proposed bills send an awful message to an already vulnerable group of kids. They're not hurting anyone, we shouldn't be hurting them. Please vote no on SB 479 & 480.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Alex Habriga
Fitchburg, WI 53575

Hello, Members of the Senate Committee on Health, Senator Cabral-Guevera, Senator Testin, Senator Felzkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, and Senator Carpenter,

I, Gail Marquardt, am a registered voter/neighbor/community member in Shorewood, WI. I have lived here for more than 25 years and am a parent to an LGBTQ individual.

I care about this bill/measure because parents and caregivers have the right to do what is right - and necessary - for their children's wellbeing. Research shows that transgender children (AND adults) who are supported and receive gender-affirming care have significantly lower rates of suicide. My transgender daughter is an adult, and has the full support of her family and friends. I can't imagine the incredibly negative impact it would have on her if she was denied the medical care she needs to - this is important - BE WHO SHE IS. Similarly, children should not be denied the gender-affirming care they need. None of this is done in a vacuum. Parents, their children, and their medical providers make decisions based on what is best for the child's physical and mental health, backed by medical authorities.

As a member of this community, **I urge you to vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480** as they are likely to

... cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

... negatively impact the well-being of my community members. It is already difficult enough to access medical care. Please do not add unnecessary challenges to families of transgender individuals.

... cause medical providers in areas where there are already too few, to leave the state for areas where they are allowed to practice in alignment with their medical training and professional ethics.

I know you share in my care for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you **OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480 today**. You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Gail Marquardt, 53211

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Jessica Henning of Muskego, WI. I want to speak to the reality of the proposed In regards to the trans medical ban SB480. I implore you to make your decision based on the leading experts in the medical field such as the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the endocrine society who have established the details of standards of care for transgender children. It it's imperative that the options established by these organizations for the treatment of transgender patients be made available to them and we should continue to follow their standards as we do for all other medical treatments.

This ban does not safeguard children from harm and does in fact put them deaper in harms way. By disallowing treatments like puberty blockers that allow for additional time for parents, children, and physicians to make educated decisions on their children's care needs you would be subjecting them to subsequent painful procedures that would be unnecessary with puberty blockers such as mastectomies and facial feminization surgeries that are painful recoveries and prohibitively costly.

This also continues to disproportionally increase the levels of depression in children experiencing gender dysphoria that can cause high rates of suicide. Children with the aid of their parents, physicians, and mental health providers should be able to choose the proper care that is necessary for their treatment and not barred from the proven treatment plans that are instrumental in improving their health and wellbeing. Regret rates for transgender care are less than 1% of patients treated which is a major indicating factor of the efficacy of this type of care when other procedures like knee replacement, hip replacement, spinal surgery all have higher regret rates than gender affirming care.

As a transgender person, depression wasted much of my early years of my life. With proper interventions my involvement and quality of life could have been greatly improved. This medical intervention you are proposing to ban saved my life. I humbly ask that you give others the option to have the same care save theirs. Please act in the best interests of children who rely on this care and do not put them through undo harm, depression, and high risk of suicide by denying them access to these medical interventions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Jessica Henning

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Solidad Fanta Pautsch, and I am a resident of the Town Of Sun Prairie, Dane County. I've lived in Wisconsin for 23 years, my whole life, and I am going to be graduating soon from Madison College.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because it is abhorrent for the government to be infringing the health care of others, this right should remain a decision between the patient and their medical professionals. Gender affirming care, even for minors, is widely accepted and supported by many major health facilities and countless studies. Gender affirming health care has been shown to reduce suicide rates and improve the health and lives of the individual far beyond any other drug created to treat depression. These kinds of bills are a stepping stone for a total ban on gender affirming care, and potentially many more radical health care restrictions targeted at minorities. Do not let that first step be cemented into place.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Solidad Fanta Pautsch

Town Of Sun Prairie, Dane County, 53527

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Sara Culotta and I am a resident of Ledgeview, WI. I've lived in Wisconsin for 47 years, have teens and have many years of experience off with children.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because politics has no business on gender issues.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin. Bills such as these does not support the mental health of all children.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,
Sara Culotta
Ledgeview, WI

Morgan Gald

Regarding Senate Bill 480

October 12, 2023

IN OPPOSITION

My name is Morgan Gald. I am writing as both personally, as a concerned citizen of the state of Wisconsin, and as a community healthcare provider. I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and am a Certified Transgender Care Therapist. I provide outpatient mental health therapy at a non-profit clinic in Appleton, Wisconsin.

I am testifying against SB 480 as a mental health professional who has seen the real, devastating effects that are the consequence of individuals not being able to access necessary, life-saving care as prescribed by a team of medical professionals. I have worked directly with the population targeted by this bill on a daily basis since 2019. I have worked with many gender diverse teenagers and their families and have seen both the devastating consequences that rejection has as well as the incredible impact loving and acceptance has on a child.

Policing what medical care a person is able to access in response to political propaganda is causing significant, observable harm. I have seen it day in and day out for the past four years. I have watched as these young people are crushed by the rejection of their family members, schools, and community simply for existing and being themselves. While writing this, I recalled a number of heartbreaking stories involving both my clients and my personal friends. Out of respect for individual privacy, I will not share any details of these stories. I can share, however, that I will never forget the image or the sound of a child sobbing so loudly in my office, feeling crushed, rejected, and hurt by their parent for simply seeking to be loved for who they are.

Bills such as the one being discussed here today, are a response to misinformation and fear mongering that are simply not at all reflective of the reality of gender affirming care for adolescents. Every major medical and professional organization, including the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, American Academy of Nursing, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Counseling Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Psychological Association, American Public Health Association, and National Association of Social Workers all support the evidence-based practice of providing gender affirming treatment for minors. WPATH, or the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, is an international organization comprised of the leading experts from across the globe who research types of interventions, the impact of these treatments, and compile a detailed, thorough set of practice guidelines that all professionals, including myself, use when working with a gender diverse child or adolescent. To become a Certified Transgender Care Therapist, I attended 56 hours of training from

Dear Senate Committee Members,

My name is Graysen Serna, I live in Delavan Wisconsin, and have lived in Wisconsin for 18 years.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO to the bills SB 479 and SB 480

I have never felt comfortable in my own skin as I was born in the wrong body. Having hopes for gender-affirming care has kept me going, and hopeful for the future.

After 15 years of depression, anxiety, pain, confusion, hurt, bullying, I have finally been on the path to receiving gender-affirming treatment. Banning all forms of gender-affirming care for minors would be detrimental for the trans and LGBTQ community. It will affect the mental and physical health of young kids and teenagers. This will cause the high risk of suicide rates in young teens to sky rocket even higher than it is right now. It's taking away their basic human freedom and right to be who they want to be.

Allowing the doctors who provide this gender-affirming healthcare to be sued would not be fair to the time and effort of practice that it took for them to accomplish and complete their PHD or doctoral degree. Why should they be punished for doing their job as a doctor and providing care? Gender-affirming care for minors is just as important as any other care for any patient. Why take away that care when it's not affecting you personally.

I hope you take into consideration the thousands of lives that are at hand when banning gender-affirming care. Children's lives are at hand.

Graysen Serna
of Delavan WI 53115

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Betsy Kleba. I was born in Black River Falls, WI and graduated from Lincoln High School in Alma Center, WI. Fast forward to today where I live with my husband and children in Waunakee, WI. Wisconsin is home.

I am writing to you today as a concerned parent advocating for the rights and well-being of my children and the gender-questioning and transgender kids in our state. Access to comprehensive healthcare is a fundamental right for all individuals and it is our duty to ensure that no child is denied the care they need simply because of their gender identity. For this reason I urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480.

Four years ago my fun-loving 14 year old who loved hanging out with friends and was doing well in school suddenly disengaged, first from school, then from friends and then from the rest of life. It was painful to witness my beautiful child withering away before my eyes. My husband and I spent months trying to understand the underlying cause. When my young teen finally opened up about what she was experiencing she also admitted thoughts of suicide. She was looking for ways to end the pain, the pain of existing in a body she didn't identify with, the pain of navigating a school environment that looked at her and saw something other than what she wanted the school community to see, the pain of knowing the world was focusing hate at her just because she doesn't conform to a stereotype. There are no words to adequately describe the emotions that consumed me when she finally opened up with all of these revelations. All I knew is that it is my job as a parent to protect her from harm – to seek the care she needs to grow from a teenager into a healthy and productive adult. My husband and I immediately sought help wherever we could get it and this included with a pediatrician with experience caring for gender questioning kids. That care is what has made all the difference in the world. Fast forward to today and my teen is a senior in high school, she has straight As and is preparing her applications for college.

I wouldn't wish the dark days of the past several years that my child experienced on any individual or family. Passing bills that block access to physicians when a child and families most need medical expertise is gross and negligent because if these bills pass it will come at the cost of the lives of our most vulnerable children. Politicians shouldn't be interfering with personal medical decisions. On the contrary, our elected officials should be doing MORE to protect LGBTQ+ kids and their families including maintaining access to the expertise needed to navigate some of life's most challenging times.

Thank you for protecting ALL Wisconsin children.

Sincerely,

Betsy Kleba
Waunakee, WI 52597

Hello Members of the Senate Committee on Health, Senator Cabral-Guevera, Senator Testin, Senator Felzkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, and Senator Carpenter,

I, Eric Stimson McConahay, am a registered voter/neighbor/community member in Madison. I have lived here for 23 years and am an ally to the LGBTQ community, who are my friends and family.

I care about this bill/measure because every Wisconsinite to have the same opportunity to live as their genuine selves, and to make it clear with no uncertainty that this state does NOT interfere with personal and family decisions.

As a member of this community, **I urge you to vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480** as they are likely to negatively impact the well-being of my community members. It is already difficult enough to access medical care. Please do not add unnecessary challenges to families of transgender individuals.

These bills could also cause medical providers in areas where there are already too few, to leave the state for areas where they are allowed to practice in alignment with their medical training and professional ethics.

I know you share in my care for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you **OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480 today**. You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Eric Stimson McConahay 53716

Good evening Members of the Senate Committee on Health, Senator Cabral-Guevera, Senator Testin, Senator Felzkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, and Senator Carpenter,

My name is Hannah Serwe, and I am a resident in Eken Park. I have lived here for 1 year and 5 months and am member of the LGBTQ community and am also a clinical social worker.

As someone who is a trained mental health provider, I have gone through extensive training in order to be able to provide gender-affirming care for clients. I have invested significant time and money to be trained by specialists across the world including the World Professional Association for Transgender Health. Politicians have no business regulating decisions between clients, families and their healthcare providers. These bills also go against best practice and the consensus of the medical community and the general population. If you're interested in exploring measures connected to healthcare, please stop attacking trans people, and focus your efforts on passing bills to reduce health disparities, increasing access to care and/or adequately staffing and compensating workers.

As a member of this community, **I urge you to vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480 as they are likely to literally cost lives.**

I know you share in my care for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you **OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480 today.** You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Hannah Serwe, MSW LCSW, 53704
she/her/hers

Good morning, Members of the Senate Committee on Health,

I am writing to implore you to oppose Senate Bills 479 and 480. I was a teacher and someone familiar with the LGBTQ community, I am very aware of the challenges faced by LGBTQ youth. Their struggle to feel safe and welcome in their communities is very real and constant. Their difficulty in accessing medical care is unfair and dangerous. Medical decisions are the business of the individual, their family, and their doctor. Politics has no place in this situation.

Please vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480.

Robert Kohout
Sturgeon Bay, WI
54235

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Jay Coleman, and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for my entire life, go to public schools, and work hard to represent people like me in all aspects of my life, from sports to medicine to the workplace.

I am writing to you today to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because I believe everyone has the right to bodily autonomy and that medical care is incredibly important, especially for transgender people. As a transgender kid, the ability to medically transition has saved my life. Gender dysphoria and the crippling anxiety and depression that come along with it are nothing to be trifled with. The number of transgender and nonbinary children who attempt suicide every year is unbelievable. By denying these kids access to one of the things that can save them, you are causing more harm. More hurt. More death.

If passed, these bills will cost so many lives. Suicides that could be easily prevented. Everyone deserves to be able to see a future where they can exist. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin. Being allowed to exist in the body you feel you belong in should be the minimum.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families. Gender-affirming care saves lives.

Sincerely,

Jay Coleman

Madison, 53704

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Luc Maker, and I am a resident of Shorewood. I've lived in Wisconsin for 20 years and am raising two children in my local public school.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because I firmly believe in the right of our citizens to access life-saving health care. Other citizens are able to access medical procedures that they need, and transgender Wisconsinites should have the same rights as everyone else.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,
Luc Maker
Shorewood, 53211

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Susan Rampacher and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 32 years and I own my home and live with my 15 year old child and long time partner. I've worked in the non-profit sector for my professional life and spend that time helping people with food insecurity and child care.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because they are dangerous to the health and wellbeing of individuals and our community as a whole. I know first hand as I watch my child find ways to express who they are that our support for their journey to wholeness is critical. The mental health challenges are real - depression, anxiety, suicide are all consequences that any person told they can't be themselves and find their real identity will face.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,
Susan Ramspacher
Madison, 53704

To the GOP Members of the Legislature:

Why do you go out of your way to cause damage to people who have never done you any harm?

What possible legitimate societal purpose does it serve for you to inject yourself into private medical decisions made by patients and medical professionals in accordance with the recommendations of EVERY professional medical association? What personal satisfaction do you get from hurting the innocent? Enquiring minds want to know.

You are going to kill people with these bills.

I know you know this. I also know that this is the entire purpose of these bills. You do not value their lives. You do not care for their rights, or the rights of their parents who have approved these necessary and life-saving medical treatments. You seek only to crush those you hate.

There is no legitimate medical or societal purpose for these bills, and for these bills even to have been brought up for consideration is a damning indictment of your morals.

May God have mercy on the shriveled remnants of your souls, and may you seek His guidance in repenting your sin in supporting these bills.

Dr. David McKay
Janesville WI

Dear SB 479 Committee members,

I have been with my spouse for the better part of 35 years. I have been teaching for 32 years. My beloved home state of Wisconsin is holding hearings on discriminatory anti LGBTQ+ legislation against ALL best practice research based medical, mental health and academic institutional recommendations for LGBTQ+ care.

The degree of immorality and abuse of power in all these actions, on short notice, targeting a historically oppressed community devastates me. I am deeply embarrassed by your inhumane actions and utter disregard for LGBTQ+ people.

You are elected officials representing ALL of the people. I expect you to honor your oath and do so.

In a month schools nationwide are dedicated to teaching standing up against bullying, STAND UP against bullying against LGBTQ+ people. STAND UP against discriminating legislation and other members, citizens and funding who aim to cause harm to an extremely vulnerable community.

Statistically, we are 10% of the general population. In addition, as you already know, we are also more susceptible to violence, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and suicide. This is my family, my students and my community you have been waging silent war against. LGBTQ + people will continue to die by these actions you are taking.

STOP IT! YOU ARE KILLING US. STAND UP FOR US. STOP AB465 NOW and in turn STAND UP FOR US by proposing supporting care, systems, funding and strengthened legal protections.

B. Denise Christofferson, LGBTQ+
Mom
Auntie
Cousin
Daughter
Friend
Teacher
WI resident
US Citizen
Human

115 Grand Avenue
Thiensville WI 53092

Dear Senate Committee on Health,

I oppose SB 479 and/or SB 480. Like it or not teens need gender affirming care. They are suffering from gendered issues and it impacts their mental health and school life. To get rid of these resources is the number one reason why suicide is so high in teens. You can not get rid of gender affirming care if you claim to be pro choice because you have to care.

Whitney Nevala

Delavan, WI

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because they are dangerous to the health and wellbeing of individuals and our community as a whole. I know first hand as I watch my child find ways to express who they are that our support for their journey to wholeness is critical. The mental health challenges are real - depression, anxiety, suicide are all consequences that any person told they can't be themselves and find their real identity will face.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Andrew Markiewicz
2006 Yahara Pl
Madison, WI 53704

Good morning, Members of the Senate Committee on Health,

I am writing to ask you to oppose Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a former teacher and person with friends in the LGBTQ community, I am aware of some of the challenges faced by LGBTQ youth. Their struggle to feel safe and welcome in their communities is very real and constant. Adding to this vulnerability the difficulty of accessing medical care is not only unfair but dangerous. Medical decisions are personal and private and the business of the individual, their family, and their doctor. It is not the business of legislators.

Please vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480.

Sincerely,

Susan Kohout
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Health:

My name is Anne Schuette and I live in Manitowoc, WI. I obtained my medical degree and completed a pediatric residency at the Medical School of the University of Wisconsin. I write to express my opposition to SB 480. This bill targets a very small but vulnerable group of Wisconsin citizens: intersex* and transgender people under the age of 18 years. Legislating permissible vs not permissible health care is extremely concerning because of the medical complexity involved in determining sex and gender, and helping families understand and navigate challenging situations.

Wisconsin is fortunate to have several nationally recognized Pediatric Endocrinology clinics, and pediatricians across the state can access these specialists and refer patients for advanced care when questions about gender arise. Care includes genetic testing, hormone studies, and detailed mental health screening for all ages. Care provided by these specialty clinics is among the best in the nation.

Legislative restriction of necessary medical care in our state will hurt patients, and hurt families. Doctors seeking to provide complete care may leave our state, depriving our citizens of their expertise.

Thank you for seeking public input and please reject taking further steps to bring SB 480 to a vote. Please allow families and their trusted medical providers make medical decisions outside of the realm of politics.

Sincerely,

Anne Schuette MD

410 Waldo Blvd.

Manitowoc WI 54220

*I consider intersex people to be affected by this bill, even with the provisions included, because if mis-gendered at birth these children and their families will also have to go through more trauma and confusion than they already are subjected to.

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Kathleen M Cipriani and I am a resident of TOMAH, Wi. I've lived in Wisconsin for 19 years and my parents lived here for about 30 years. I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because I believe they violate people's right to feel comfortable in their own skin as well as create additional mental health deterioration for those who are members of the LGBTQ community.

I have three friends with children ranging from 10 years old to young adults whose lives will drastically change if this bill passes. Their families are afraid of losing them to suicide because of their fear of what having no gender affirming health care could do to them. This is not a political issue but a right to live the way you feel on the inside issue. If this affected your child, grandchild or close friends life you would be afraid as well! The suicide rate is 30-50% higher in this community depending on where in the country they live. See attached arrival!

if passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,
Kathleen M Cipriani
TOMAH, Wi 54660

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Danielle Casper and I am a resident of the town of Freedom. I've lived in Wisconsin for 9 years and have started my career as a mental health therapist here and have chosen to start a family here.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because as a mental health professional and a mom, I know and believe that trans* folks are people who deserve to make their own medical decisions and be supported in that process. Their bodily autonomy should not be a topic of public discussion. I don't want to have to tell any of my children that other people know more about them than they do and that I can't make their pain better.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,
Danielle Casper
Town of Freedom, 54130

My name is Chris Regalado; I've lived in Wausau since late 2019 and I oppose bills 479 and 480 due to the fact that no one- especially the government- should have a voice in anyone else's gender and/or expression of such no matter their age or their sex.

I've watched many friends have to deal with severe anxiety over threats to necessary gender affirming medical care- medical care that makes them comfortable in their own bodies and minds and that no one has any right to threaten in the first place.

Even when not actively affecting a queer person, bills like this send waves of fear through the community at not only the possibility of getting medical care taken from us or those we care about, but it also paints a target on all of us for those who wish us ill and everyone- including those who continue to push these kinds of things- should be aware of this.

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Gabrielle Dingman, and I am a resident of the city of Milwaukee. I was born and raised in Wisconsin.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because of the damage they will cause to our state's trans youth population.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

**Sincerely
Gabrielle Dingman
Milwaukee, WI 53202**

Hi,

My name is Dominique Villasenor, and I am a second year Masters in Public Affairs student at La Follette. I am writing to you today to share my concerns about SB 479 and SB 480. Mental health is crucial for the LGTBQ+ community and banning any form of gender affirming care for minors in Wisconsin will have negative effects on the health of the LGTBQ+ community.

Individuals in this community are prone to be suicidal and have a high risk of self-harm. Allowing these bills to pass will cause drastic health issues in this community and can increase further trauma.

I am writing my testimony to advocate for the health of the LGTBQ+ community by voicing my concerns against anti-trans bills: SB 479 and SB 480.

Sincerely,

Dominique Villasenor, MPA 24'

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Kadance Poleski, and I am a resident of Dane. I've lived in Wisconsin for 19 years and would love for this state to be more progressive since we are a state on that purple flip floppy side. I think we just need to decide what kind of state we want to be. And be it.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bill because I have always been surrounded by trans people(men specifically) and it hurts my heart every time people even want a bill passed that's directly targeted against them and their happiness. And when people put their personal beliefs into government systems and actions. When people hate in others period. I think we should just let people live their lives. Because it has nothing to do with us.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Kadance Poleki

DANE, 53529

To the Wisconsin Senate Health Committee:

My name is Jocelyn Langholz, MSW, LCSW from Ashland, Wisconsin 54806. I am offering testimony against SB 480, as a therapist that has been providing care to youth and adults exploring gender identity and pursuing gender affirming care for the past 10 years. My comments reflect my professional training specific to transgender care, my practice with individuals and families, WPATH guidelines which provide safeguards and enhance positive outcomes in the process of gender transition, and statistics about the risks to LGBTQ youth and trans and non-binary youth associated with lack of access to gender affirming care.

This bill is based on bad information and fear. Youth who have not reached puberty and are questioning their gender identity or clearly stating that they see themselves as a gender different from what they were assigned at birth are not getting hormones and surgeries. Children can experiment with clothing, hairstyles, toys, friend groups, and pronouns. They can benefit from social transition, which may be all they are interested in pursuing, even into adolescence or adulthood.

While some adolescents do take hormones and puberty blockers, this is a step that is carefully considered with youth and their parents, who must provide consent. Working with a therapist is best practice, as youth do often experience anxiety and depression, sometimes associated specifically with gender dysphoria, but also often in response to the minority stress of being bullied or unsupported. Additionally, like the general population, some trans/non-binary youth do have histories of trauma or other mental health concerns. Mental health concerns do not preclude pursuing hormone therapy, if the youth is stable enough and has enough support to navigate emotional changes that may occur with initial adjustment to hormonal shifts. Endocrinologists provide detailed explanations in the process of informed consent, as with any other hormonal treatment. Ongoing appropriate lab monitoring provides further safeguards.

Most minors do not pursue top surgery, although on occasion those who meet criteria through the WPATH process and have been engaging in transition steps for an extended time, may do so in later teen years. This is a relatively rare occurrence, which is a decision made with parental consent and a professional care team. To the best of my knowledge, genital surgeries are not being performed on minors anywhere in the country. Creating laws to prohibit practices that are rarely occurring creates additional stigma and harm to those who are simply seeking to live lives that reflect who they are in the world. It is harmful and bad faith.

If you are a lawmaker that advocates/votes for parental rights related to educational choice, vaccinations, or book bans, etc., at a minimum, you need to maintain consistency and trust and support parents in pursuing care for their trans and non-binary dependent children / youth as well.

If enacted, this law will lead to harm and death for the youth you claim you want to protect. The Trevor Project offers data from a recent, large study of 25,000 LGBTQ youth between the ages of 13 and 24, in 2020. 45% of LGBTQ youth reports suicidal thoughts in the past year. The rates for severe depression, suicidal thoughts and attempts are up to 2 times higher for trans and non-binary youth than their cisgender LGBQ peers. The impact of support makes a huge difference. In communities identified as non-supportive, the suicide attempt rate in LGBTQ youth was 21%. At the other end of the spectrum, in highly supportive communities, the rate was 8%. Attacks against their right to simply live and pursue a sense of self that feels right can only harm.

Good morning, Members of the Senate Committee on Health, Senator Cabral-Guevera, Senator Testin, Senator Felzkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, and Senator Carpenter,

I, Justene Wilke, am a registered voter/neighbor/community member in Madison. I have lived here for 21 years and am a registered nurse and former teacher.

I care about this bill/measure because I have friends and family in the LGBTQ2+ community that are being directly harmed by this wave anti-trans and anti-LGBTQ2+ fanaticism that is sweeping the nation. Furthermore, everyone deserves evidence based healthcare and the evidence is clear that gender affirming healthcare is beneficial to children, particularly with regard to mental health and a decrease in suicidality.

As a member of this community, **I urge you to vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480** as they are likely to

... cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

... negatively impact the well-being of my community members. It is already difficult enough to access medical care. Please do not add unnecessary challenges to families of transgender individuals.

... cause medical providers in areas where there are already too few, to leave the state for areas where they are allowed to practice in alignment with their medical training and professional ethics.

I know you share in my care for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you **OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480 today**. You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration, Sincerely,

Justene Wilke
Zip Code: 53714

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Katherine Dreyer, and I am a resident of Shorewood, WI. I was born and raised in Wisconsin. I left for several years, I came home because I was proud of our state, changes to our state like these make me sad to live in Wisconsin.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because they are damaging to our trans youth population, and all of Wisconsin youth, taking family decisions and handing them over to politicians

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,
Katherine Dreyer
Shorewood, WI 53211

To the 2023 Senate Committee on Health

My name is Valerie Haupt

I encourage any of you interested in a dialogue with a trans person or for more information on any of my links or comments to contact me at 801-803-3241 or email me at valeriefhaupt@gmail.com

SB 480 is another attempt by the government to intervene in medical decisions they don't fully understand.

The procedures outlined in Section 1 as gender transition medical intervention are considered best practice procedures as outlined in WPATH, the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, and endorsed by every major medical association in America. (Their recommendations and findings can be found at <https://www.wpath.org/publications/soc>)

Those best practices involve many concerned parties - the parents, the patient, and an entire medical team - and they weigh all of the options before steps are taken. No one is seeking this care and receiving a surgery the same day.

Gender affirming surgeries, when undertaken, have a less than 1% regret rate, a rate far lower than pretty much any other category of surgery documented.

And honestly, receiving any kind of affirming care, let alone surgeries, doesn't happen very frequently at all, because the amount of luck that enough cis people will actually listen to those trans kids trying to explain who they actually are is immense. They need to accept themselves, hope their parents will listen, hope that care is available and affordable, hope that the medical professionals they have access to will listen, etc.

Imagine going through all those painful slow steps, only to be told that a group of politicians thinks they know your life and situation better than you and your care team does, and you're denied that care.

In addition, language from the bill and spoken by its sponsors is copy and paste legislation all around the country, driven by people motivated to make trans people a wedge issue for votes. I know votes on these bills are coming up swiftly so your time to listen to new information is limited, but the series Anti Trans Hate Machine (<https://translash.org/antitranshatemachine/>) has an episode specifically dealing with the people behind this and their motivations (season 1, episode 2)

Please do not pass this bill. Thank you.

Valerie Haupt
Madison, WI, 53719

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Nate Schimanski, and I am a resident of Fond du Lac County. I've lived in Wisconsin for pretty much my whole life- 25 years and have lived in 6 different towns/cities across the state. My husband and I both received our undergraduate degrees and have completed/ are working towards Master degrees through UW Schools.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because I support the rights of my loved ones and all Wisconsin citizens to be able to obtain necessary care without delay, judgment, or apathy. As an American I am a strong advocate of individuals' rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The government has no business making or governing decisions of those making decisions for their own best self.

If passed, these bills will **cost lives**. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Nate Schimanski
Fond du Lac, WI 54937

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Jon Blanchard, and I am a resident of Oregon. I've lived in Wisconsin for 40 years and have an immediate family member that identifies as LGBTQ+.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because of the very dangerous adverse effect they may have on Wisconsin's youth. These youth are already very vulnerable and may turn to self-harm if not given the help they need.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Jon Blanchard
Oregon, WI 53575

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Kären Miskimen and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 39 years and have many transgender and queer friends and family.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because it's cruel, anti-science and needless. Let people be!

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,
Kären Miskimen

Madison, WI 53704

October 12, 2023

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Sarah Quinn, and I am a resident of Madison, Wisconsin. I've lived in Wisconsin for my whole life, nearly 42 years. I am a high school teacher in the Madison Metropolitan School District and have supported many transgender students throughout my career in both Stoughton, WI and Madison, WI.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because they are against our values. The proposed bills intrude on the right to privacy and decisions over health care. Gender affirming care has saved the lives of many students and family friends. It is not the business of our state government to regulate these deeply personal healthcare decisions.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Sarah Quinn

Madison, WI 53711

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Tina Gluting, and I am a resident of Delavan, Wisconsin. I've lived in Wisconsin for 6.5 years.

I am writing to urge you to vote **NO** on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because it will affect the lives of young children who are fully aware of their preferred gender. They will DIE!

I knew a young girl who realized that she is indeed a male - and pleaded to get hormone blockers to no avail as a child. He went through puberty and attempted suicide. Finally at age 18, he went through hormone treatments and had to go through puberty again - and still struggles because he still has female symptoms. He said he really needed those blockers before puberty.

I know of a young girl who realized that she is indeed a male - at age 7 - and has the most understanding mother in the world. She fought and fought hard and he is currently on hormone blockers - at age 11. He had nightmares of drowning in blood from the menstrual period. Once he learned that he was approved to start hormone blockers - his nightmares stopped - and is going through treatment at this time. However, if this bill gets passed - I am afraid of his life and the others....

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I do not believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should be only made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,
Tina Gluting
Delavan, Wisconsin (53115)

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Rufus Jupiter, and I am a resident of Vernon County in Wisconsin. I was born in Wisconsin and have lived here for 35 years, in both urban and rural locales.

I am a 43 year old, nonbinary transmasculine person. I identify neither as male nor as female, and I use they/them pronouns since that is the language that feels comfortable to me. As a young person growing up in the 1980s and 1990s, there was not widespread language to describe people whose gender was other than binary male or female. There were no visible, out LGBTQ+ individuals in my life and few in the public eye who I could look to for guidance. I lived a childhood feeling no true sense of who I was as a person (although I was told by others who I was all the time). By the time I was an adult, I was diagnosed with severe anxiety and depression; I felt lost and worthless, unseen, unknown to anyone, even myself.

It took until my mid- 30s for language to appear in the mainstream dialogue that accurately mirrored who I was. As transgender people and people on the gender spectrum became more visible in the public eye, I began to recognize myself. My anxiety and depression fell away as I finally began to understand and claim my identity. At 38, I began gender- affirming medical care, and this year I was fortunate enough to have the surgery I've been dreaming of for all of my adulthood. I believe gender- affirming medical care has saved my life.

Today, while visibility of LGBTQ+ folks has expanded greatly, we face a future of uncertainty and fear. How is it, in this country where individual liberties are a supposed right of all citizens, that members of my community still fight for the ability to make our own choices for our own healthcare? Our own bodies? How is it that people like me, who not only are facing this denial of choice, also face a socially- dictated denial of even existing as who we know we are?

I am writing to implore you to vote NO on Senate Bill 480. If passed, these bills will further anti-trans, anti- LGBTQ+ sentiment in this country. As someone who has lived a life that society has deemed again and again to be devoid of worth (until I decide to "be" someone I am not), I can tell you that every piece of legislation that advances these restrictive views will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,
Rufus Jupiter
(they/them)

Viroqua, WI
54665

to the Senate committee:

legislating transgender bodies doesn't work. I know many, many folks whose kids would be affected by the draconian legislation you are attempting to pass in the forms of SB 479 and SB 480, and they would likely choose to move to a safer state like Minnesota. HRT and other forms of care are safe and effective, and puberty blockers have effects that can be reversed simply by stopping them.

you, as a result of these proposals, are making Wisconsin an unsafe place to live. there is nothing to gain by attempting to punish medical staff for allowing trans* folks to become themselves.

I am extremely disappointed in you.

~Chris Lofgren, Eau Claire

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Jolene Kuhl, and I am a resident of the Village of Minong. I've lived in Wisconsin for 2 years and have been a frequent visitor throughout my life before moving with my family to live full time in this great state.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because there is nothing good that can come from lawmakers playing doctor and blocking critical healthcare services for my fellow Wisconsinites. I have many loved ones who are LGBTQ+ and gender affirming health care SAVES LIVES.

It has saved the lives of many I hold dear who likely would not be here if bills like these were passed. I deeply fear for those who are in the process of receiving these services and those who will need them in the future.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Jolene Kuhl

Minong, 54859

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Dana Dahhan, and I am a resident of Dane County. I've lived in Wisconsin for the past 9 years and consider Wisconsin to be my home state for the rest of my life.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I believe that transgender and non-binary youth are due dignity equal to their cisgender peers and are thus entitled to the full extent of medical care endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Association, and the American Psychiatric Association. I believe the state legislature does not have the right to impinge upon a doctor's, physician assistant's, or nurse's abilities to provide the same standard of healthcare available to cisgender youth or to impinge on a parent's right to make medical decisions for their children in consultation with medical professionals.

The language of Senate Bills 479 and 480 specifically restricts the abilities of healthcare professionals to provide basic, life-saving, and affirming medical care to transgender and non-binary youth. Such similar bans on healthcare endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Association, and the American Psychiatric Association have been overturned or put on hold in other states across the country, and I believe that proceeding with these bills is both wasteful and an abominable display of discrimination. I am ashamed that any legislators from the state of Wisconsin have endorsed short-sighted, bigoted, and discriminatory policies and appreciate the support of those who stand in opposition of this bill.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin. And penalizing or threatening doctors for providing accepted and safe standards of care (as defined by medical professionals, not political bodies) will prevent the state of Wisconsin from having a body of medical professionals whose support and livelihood are essential to the wellbeing, lives, and livelihoods of Wisconsinites throughout the state, no matter their age, gender, or political affiliation.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Dana Dahhan, PhD

Madison, WI 53703

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Amber, and I am a resident of Waunakee, Wisconsin. I've lived in Wisconsin for my entire life of 28 years and have been proudly teaching our youngest learners for 5 years now.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am vehemently opposed to these bills.

Senate Bill 479 attacks the right of transgender youth and families to seek professional medical treatment from trusted medical professionals. This bill discourages doctors from providing life saving gender affirming care because they could be sued for doing so. Care such as puberty blockers and hormone therapy is safe and reversible (however, only 1% of individuals who have transitioned say that they regretted it, a much lower number than people who say they regret knee surgery). More permanent treatment like surgery is rare under the age of 18 and is only recommended after discussion with mental health professionals and physicians to determine if it is the most appropriate course of action. Politicians and strangers have no business weighing in on that decision. It is a decision that is weighed thoughtfully by all those involved. No one is being coerced into harmful care. Gender affirming care provided by trained healthcare professionals is not harming youth. It is ensuring that they live past their youth to become adults.

Senate bill 480 seeks to ban all forms of gender affirming care for youth in Wisconsin. Gender affirming care is scientifically proven to enhance mental health and overall wellbeing of transgender youth and is shown to increase positive outcomes for these individuals. Gender affirming care saves lives. Period. Denying this care to minors in Wisconsin will increase suicide rates of transgender and nonbinary youth. The fact alone should be enough to halt this bill. Young people should not be allowed to die simply because someone who is not involved in their healthcare decisions disagrees with their existence. Young people should not be allowed to die because someone who is unaffected in any way by their decision to use a different sex than the one given to them at birth has a problem with how they choose to be and exist. Gender affirming care is necessary so that transgender youths become adults.

I want to know that the young, loving, enthusiastic, eager children that I teach are going to grow into happy, supported, healthy adults. If passed, these bills will cost lives of these vibrant individuals.

Sincerely,

Amber Thompson

Waunakee, Wisconsin

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Stephanie, and I am a resident of Baraboo. I've lived in Wisconsin for 28 of my 32 years of life. I have worked as a nurse for 10 of those years, all in Wisconsin.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because this prevents life saving care to many patients. These patients are just trying to get life saving, or at least mental health improvement medical care. I cannot understand how these bills would help anyone. If people are able to get a breast augmentation or botox and filler to feel better, why can a person not get a mastectomy to feel better? I see no governmental concern for all of the people getting cosmetic procedures, that alter the way they look and feel.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Blazek Davis

Baraboo, 53913

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Ryan Browne, and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 12 years, was a small business owner, and am a father of two elementary-aged children.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because they target Wisconsin's transgender youth, eroding their fundamental human rights to privacy, freedom, and bodily autonomy. It's important to me that our state stands for equality and inclusivity for all residents, regardless of gender identity. Further, the health care professionals who help transgendered youth deserve protection while performing their jobs.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Ryan J. Browne
Madison, WI 53705

Hello, Members of the Senate Committee on Health, Senator Cabral-Guevera, Senator Testin, Senator Felzkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, and Senator Carpenter,

I am a registered voter in Madison, Dane County (53704). I am also a member of the LGBTQ community, a person of faith, and Master's level social worker at a local nonprofit here in Madison.

I care about this bill because, if passed, it would be detrimental to my trans and gender nonconforming loved ones. As a partner of a trans man, I've witnessed the stress and exhaustion caused by barriers to care he already must face simply because of being trans. I do not wish this type of stress on others.

As a member of this community, **I urge you to vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480** as they are likely to:

... cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

... negatively impact the well-being of my community members. It is already difficult enough to access medical care. Please do not add unnecessary challenges to families of transgender individuals.

... cause medical providers in areas where there are already too few, to leave the state for areas where they are allowed to practice in alignment with their medical training and professional ethics.

I know you share in my care for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you **OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480 today**. You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Leah Rolando (she/her)
53704

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Mary Ostrander, and I am a resident of Stoughton. I've lived in Wisconsin for 33 years (all my life) and I am a youth services librarian in the South Central Library System.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because it is harmful to the youth I work with along with the rest of the youth in Wisconsin. Most prominent medical societies and associations confirm that gender affirming care is life saving and denying that will endanger youth all over the state.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,
Mary Ostrander
Stoughton, WI, 53589

We are writing to register our opposition to Senate Bill 480. We are parents of a transgender child. We are lucky; our child is happy, healthy, and thriving...and does not currently suffer from gender dysphoria. But we also know how important it will be to have a full range of treatment options available should that change. Gender dysphoria is a serious mental health condition that can and does greatly increase the likelihood of depression, anxiety, and potentially suicide in teens and children. Medical interventions like puberty blockers and hormone treatments are necessary options for treatment of dysphoria in some cases. And decisions on use of those options are not made lightly, and are best made--like most other decisions that affect our and our children's health--by parents and their doctors.

The specter of surgical interventions for individuals under 18 is a disconcerting one. But it is also vanishingly rare. In our experience with our health care provider, this would not even be an option until our son was at least 18.

All medical treatments for any condition come with risks. That is why parents--who know their children better than anyone--do not make decisions on them lightly. And we need to be able to make them with our children's doctors without political interference whenever possible. I know this is a sentiment many on this committee agree with in principle. We only ask that you remember that principle in this case as well.

Sincerely,

David Pausch and Karen Saari
Madison WI 53714

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Ryan Ehlert, and I am a resident of Appleton.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Psychiatric Association both support gender affirming care for minors.

Wisconsin needs to be a place which protects its residents, with policies backed by evidence based science.

We can't let bigotry be signed into law here.

Sincerely,

Ryan Ehlert

Please vote against the harmful proposed bills 479 and 480. Everyone knows their own body better than anyone else, and in consultation with their own doctors and support systems, should be allowed the freedom of bodily autonomy to exist in this world as an independent human being. These bills are infringing on those rights and I would implore all those in power to think carefully about the lives that they are affecting.

Thank you
Jack Whisenant

Dear Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Helen, I am a citizen of Madison, WI.

I am writing to strongly oppose SB 479 and SB 480. I am voicing my opinion that the government should not interfere with the private medical care and private decisions of its citizens, and that medical professionals who provide services should not be penalized for doing their job by providing life-saving care to transgender children.

Thank you,
Helen

Dear Member of the Senate Committee on Health

My name is Caitlin Stietz, I am a resident of Trenton, Wi. I have lived in this state for all of my 28 years, along with my entire family, and have seen first-hand the repercussions of denying people a safe space in their communities. My brother is a part of the LGBTQ community, and because of the small town we grew up in, denied it for years. It led to ten years of opioid and crack/cocaine addiction. Denying people a HUMAN RIGHT to be who they are at their core is a disservice to this entire state.

Vote no on SB 480. Denying our trans youth gender affirming care won't make them go away, you will be leading these children to their demise. Whether it be through suicide, drug addiction, or any of the other routes people take to deal with a life they don't feel safe and comfortable in.

Vote no on SB 479. We need to trust our medical professionals, and decisions made between a doctor and their patient are no one else's business. Trans people aren't new, and they aren't going anywhere. The first trans clinic was erected in 1919 and they performed gender affirming care and surgeries. The knowledge that that clinic obtained over the years would have helped bring us to a more inclusive future BUT they were looted and had almost the entire contents of their library burned in 1933 by the Nazis. Disgracing doctors for performing care that has been around for over 100 years makes you no better than them. Be on the right side of history.

This entire country was based on FREEDOM, and how it is a HUMAN RIGHT TO BE FREE. Shackling children to a life they don't feel comfortable living isn't freedom.

VOTE NO.

Good morning, Members of the Senate Committee on Health, Senator Cabral-Guevera, Senator Testin, Senator Felzkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, and Senator Carpenter,

I Jessie Laurenzi, am a registered voter/neighbor/community member in Stoughton, WI. I have lived here for over 2 years and am a member of the LGBTQ community, a business owner, and a mental health therapist. I have lived in the state of Wisconsin my entire life and have stayed here to help the mental health needs of my community.

I care about this bill/measure because of multiple reasons. As a member of the LGBTQIA+ community I know what it is personally like to feel othered, misunderstood, and hear harmful language that impacts my wellbeing. As an adult and licensed professional counselor, I have training and my own experience seeking mental health treatment to improve my mental wellbeing. However, for minors in my community, especially those who are Trans and non-binary, I have seen first hand in my work as a therapist how the lack of support systems (e.g. family, school, medical providers, government) can negatively impact their wellbeing. Passing this bill will be a death sentence to many of these minors in our state who are just kids trying to find their truth and live their most authentic life.

As a member of this community, I urge you to vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480 as they are likely to ... cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

... negatively impact the well-being of my community members. It is already difficult enough to access medical care. Please do not add unnecessary challenges to families of transgender individuals.

... cause medical providers in areas where there are already too few, to leave the state for areas where they are allowed to practice in alignment with their medical training and professional ethics.

... cause further division and hate in our state of Wisconsin.

I know you share in my care for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480 today. You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Jessie Laurenzi
53589

Hello Senate Committee on Health,

Thank you for the opportunity to oppose the harmful bills SB 479 and SB 480.

These bills are created to be harmful to children and families who are trying to live their lives as the people that they are meant to be. You may not believe that children know in their hearts who they truly are, but that does not give you the right to take away their freedom to choose to live that truth.

Children deserve proper health care to help them navigate transitioning to the life they were meant to live, that means care for living in the proper body as well. I've had friends as a teen and adult that have transitioned and talking to them, they had known since they were young that they were meant to live their life as a different gender, that they were born in the wrong body.

Now I have a child who has friends going through this as well. In some regards it makes me happy to know that parents these days seem to be more accepting of their children as people, having conversations and being more open about gender than generations before. I think of all the people I know, and sadly people that have passed away because they were not able to live as their affirmed gender.

It saddens me to see these bills that have come about simply to try and keep another person from living their most free life. Nobody should have to live in fear, and by continuing with these bills you will place a lot of people in situations of fear that are highly unnecessary.

I rarely write letters to members of government because at this point it has become harder and harder to believe in positive change. It seems like so many bills these days are brought forth just because there is a disagreement on the "right" or "moral" way for a person to live. What happened to the American ideal of "freedom"? Live and let live? I guess that only applies in certain situations. "Right" and "Moral" are so subjective to personal opinion, and it's really sad that bills would be brought forth with these things in mind.

With bills like these, you are putting limits on the potential of people in Wisconsin and here I thought we wanted to embody our motto of "Forward".

Please reconsider passing these bills.

Jamie Kiefer
Milwaukee, WI

Hello, my name is Tessa Meurer, a medical student at University of Wisconsin and resident of zip code 53202 in the City of Milwaukee.

Unfortunately, I cannot attend today's bill hearing in person, but I've attached my personal testimony on why Wisconsin should OPPOSE gender affirming care bans such as those proposed by SB 480.

Best,
Tessa

I oppose the bills stripping children of their right to healthcare.

I am a teacher and I believe students deserve to be listened to and their doctors and parents should have every tool at their disposal to help them. The government should not be stepping in and telling families and medical professionals what to do with their children. Especially when it aims to reduce well researched tools that drastically reduce the risk for self harm and suicide.

Mitch Harlan

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Karla Abad-Lopez, and I am a resident of Milwaukee. I've lived in Wisconsin for 25 years and I am the mother of a LGBTQ+ youth.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because we know that gender-affirming health care SAVES LIVES.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,
Karla Abad-Lopez
Milwaukee, WI 53215

TO: Senate Committee on Health

FROM: Rev. Julie Wilson, United Methodist Pastor

DATE: October 12, 2023

RE: Senate Bill 480

I'm Rev. Julie Wilson (she/her) Lead Pastor of Bethany United Methodist Church in Madison. I'm writing against SB-480. Like many of you, I have questioned at what age children are capable of understanding questions regarding identity. And, after many conversations with parents and grandparents I have come to realize they too have agonized over these decisions. No parent takes lightly the responsibility of protecting their child. They want what is best for their child and much thought, prayer and counseling goes into any decisions regarding medical care, especially when it comes to gender identity.

Once I listened to their stories, I realized that children are not making a decision, they are simply being their true selves. Parents shared how they watched their child struggle daily trying to be someone they weren't. When parents finally allowed their child to accept their unique identity their world changed. Their child was happier. Their mental health was improved. They succeed in school and in life. I don't know one parent that is flippant about their child's medical needs. But I know many parents who have fought courageously for their child to get the care they need to be healthy in all aspects.

My faith tells me that we are to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves. Loving my neighbor means that I see them, I hear them, and I listen to their stories. It means that God loves them, and God cares about them deeply. I urge you to listen to children, parents and grandparents. I urge you to hear their stories and I urge you to allow parents and health care providers to make sound medical decisions based on each child's need. I urge you to trust that parents know best what their child needs. I urge you to vote no on SB-480. Thank you.

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Marcia Concotelli, and I am a resident of Middleton. I've lived in Wisconsin for 33 years and I have a twelve year old transgender daughter.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because this is crucial medical care recommended by her doctors, therapists, and her entire medical team.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Marci Concotelli

Middleton, WI 53562

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a clinical psychotherapist, licensed in IL and Wisconsin. I operate a small clinic on the square in Madison, WI. I am a professional member of the World Professional Association of Transgender Health (WPATH). In addition to my graduate degree in psychology, I have an additional 40 hours of interdisciplinary training on Transgender Health i.e. providing gender affirming care to any age of individual. This training consists of the latest research in this area and includes board certified medical doctors in general practice, plastic surgery, speech pathology, Endocrinology, Psychology, academic researchers in the field.

In my clinical work, I help ages 5 to lifespan. The latest research in transgender health and providing gender affirming care to those that identify as gender expansive is essential and life saving. This minority experiences undue distress due to gender incongruence i.e. their internal gender identity differing from their external bodies.

In my work, those that address these incongruences guided by multidisciplinary board certified and licensed professionals experience immediate and profound relief from treatment. All treatment must honor the client's personal gender goals, which are entirely dictated by the gender identity and history of that human. Treatment must include at minimum access to:

- **Board Certified Endocrinologists** for initiation and maintenance of Hormone Replacement Therapy.
- **Clinically Licensed Psychotherapists/Psychologists/Psychiatrists** trained in WPATH standards of care.
- **Board Certified Medical Doctors or DO** trained in gender affirming care
- **Board Certified Plastic Surgeons** trained in gender affirming care and associated surgeries.
- **Board Certified Speech Pathologists** trained in gender affirming care.
- **Insurance- Which must be free** or if the human can afford private insurance the policy must include gender affirming care coverage.

I am available for coordination or testimony on this subject. I would be happy to meet with the Senate or anyone who has interest in saving human life. Gender Affirming care provided by qualified teams, provides essential, life saving care.

Removal of gender affirming care for humans of all ages has been shown to cause increases in suicide, suicidal ideation, depression, anxiety, increases in physical violence in the community/ and at home, and poor outcomes in biological, psychological, and sociological domains. Taking gender affirming care from any human of any age will lead to irreparable harm and guarantee poor outcomes in the aforementioned domains of life.

Well wishes.

Love C. Dialogos, LMFT
Clinical Psychotherapist

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Sophia, and I am a resident of Madison, WI. I've lived in Wisconsin for a total of 17 years and value how Wisconsin can be a safe space for many.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Sophia Svetnicka

Pronouns: she/her/hers

Clinical Intern

QUEST Counseling and Consultation Center

10/12/23

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Lorrie Hurckes, and I am a resident of Stoughton, WI. I've lived in Wisconsin for 23 years and I'm a nonbinary person raising two beautiful children with my partner. I'm a community leader and have spent my career working to promote justice, wellness, and a sense of belonging for youth and adults in our community.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because banning health care and criminalizing doctors is inhumane and barbaric. These bills are extremely harmful to our LGBTQ+ communities. They are a blatant attempt to codify discrimination and perpetuate damaging, inaccurate, and deeply offensive stereotypes against the trans community. People deserve to freely be who they are without shame, exclusion, or taking away their bodily autonomy. There are all kinds of studies that clearly show the harmful and deadly impacts these types of laws have on people, especially children. We should be nurturing, loving, and affirming trans kids, their lives depend on that. These bills are the opposite of that and will do nothing but threaten the lives and well being of children and families.

As a nonbinary person, I know first hand what it feels like to live in a society that is constantly debating and denying your right to live a full and free life. These conversations are hurtful and a constant reminder that the world is not a safe place. Is that the message you're wanting to send?

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Lorrie Hurckes

Stoughton, WI

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Kayla Johnson, and I am a resident of Eau Claire. I've lived in Wisconsin most of my life and I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480.

As a child, I grew up watching people I know be treated differently because they were members of the LGBTQIA+ community, and it affected me deeply. I struggled to come to terms with my own identity as a result, and spent many years weighed down by the hate and negativity I had learned to internalize at a young age. The youth of today deserve space to learn about and understand who they are in a safe and affirming environment. Preventing youth from seeking gender affirming care protects no one. It only creates fear and uncertainty during a phase of life that is already difficult to navigate.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Kayla Johnson

City of Eau Claire

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Sarah Bartash and I am a resident of Verona, Wisconsin. I was born in La Crosse and attended college at Viterbo and then the UW Madison. I moved away for a time but came back in 2008 and am currently working on my MBA and working remotely for a global automotive software company.

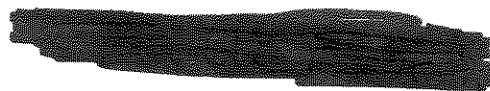
I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bill 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because they hurt children, hurt families, and get in the way of proven healthcare and the sanctity of doctor patient privilege. It should be up to NO POLITICIAN what I or anyone speak with their doctor about, and it is disgusting that these medically proven and necessary treatments should be targeted by right-wing extremist witch hunts.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. I am weary of my friends spiraling through depression and suicidal thoughts as our country vilifies them. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,
Sarah Bartash
53593

Paul Drees



La Crosse WI

54601

Beloved, I am here to speak in opposition to Senate Bill 480 in the 2023-2024 Legislative Session. I have no desire to yell or insult any of you, I simply wish to tell you how this bill breaks my heart.

As a lifelong Christian, I have always been taught to love my neighbor regardless of their identity. I have failed so many times to live up to this command from Christ. One of my most shameful failures was a deep prejudice I held against LGBTQ+ people as a child. I'm deeply ashamed that I listened to the voices of my classmates and broader culture instead of listening to my parents and pastors. I am so thankful that the Holy Spirit broke open my heart, and taught me that no sexual or gender identity can separate us from the love of God. That God loves trans people as they are, and wants them to live into their fullness of life.

The Holy Spirit taught me this through a variety of passages, such as Acts 8:26-39, where St. Philip welcomes and baptizes a person we might call intersex or trans today, or through Galatians 3:28 which proclaims 'There is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus,' or in Matthew 19:12, where Jesus commands us to accept eunuchs, a group that was marginalized because their genitals did not match what society expected.

I can see no legitimate Christian grounds for advocating for Senate Bill 480 in this session. Christianity is inherently a religion of the marginalized, but just as angry religious people crucified Jesus, the church often likes to find its own group to persecute. For reasons I cannot understand, some Christians have decided that trans people are their next target. I pray that the Holy Spirit might break open their hearts as she has broken open mine.

Gender affirming care should be a decision between a child, their parents, and the child's medical providers. I cannot understand why this bill removes that decision from parents and medical providers, and puts it in the hands of the government.

Finally, I pray that in hearing all of our remarks, you might not let your heart get calcified to the suffering of others. If any of you have had to bury a beloved, you know how tempting it is to close off our hearts and become apathetic. As a pastor, I have buried many people I loved, so I understand the temptation. Please hear this word if nothing else, we cannot function together if we do not have empathy for each other. May God be with each of you. Thank you for this time.



To: Members, Senate Committee on Health
 From: Bill Keeton, Vice President & Chief Advocacy Officer, Vivent Health
 Matt Pagnotti, State & Local Government Relations Director, Vivent Health
 Re: Opposition to Senate Bill 480

Vivent Health (formerly AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization serving nearly 5,000 individuals annually across 10 clinic locations statewide. We utilize an integrated model of care to bring together medical, dental, and mental health care; clinical and traditional pharmacy services; food pantry and nutrition services; housing assistance; legal aid; and care management and coordination services for people living with HIV. Vivent Health also provides prevention programs, including Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), testing, and harm reduction services to reduce the transmission of HIV. All the services we provide are available regardless of an individual's insurance status or their ability to pay.

Gender affirming care is based on decades of research and clinical experience. It is safe, evidence-based, and essential to reducing negative long-term outcomes. Reducing access to this care puts individuals' physical and mental health at risk and can lead to lifelong complications. As is the case with all health care, it is deeply personal and these decisions should be made in consultation with family members, loved ones, and a medical care team.

Numerous studies have proven that denying gender affirming care is deeply harmful. When care is delayed, trans youth and adults are more likely to consider and attempt suicide and experience greater depression and anxiety.^{1,2,3} These serious consequences are further amplified by stigma and harassment toward trans individuals, which often increase in the wake of proposed legislation like SB 480.^{4,5} Notably, trans individuals are 4 times as likely as their cisgender peers to be the victims of violent crime.⁶

¹ Green, A.E., DeChants, J.P., Price, M.N., & Davis, C.K. (2021). Association of gender-affirming hormone therapy with depression, thoughts of suicide, and attempted suicide among transgender and non-binary youth. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 70(2022), 643–649. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2021.10.036>

² Nolan BJ, Zwickl S, Locke P, Zajac JD, Cheung AS. Early Access to Testosterone Therapy in Transgender and Gender-Diverse Adults Seeking Masculinization: A Randomized Clinical Trial. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2023;6(9):e2331919. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.31919>

³ Jack L. Turban, Dana King, Jeremi M. Carswell, Alex S. Keuroghlian; Pubertal Suppression for Transgender Youth and Risk of Suicidal Ideation. *Pediatrics* February 2020; 145 (2): e20191725. 10.1542/peds.2019-1725

⁴ Jaclyn MW Hughto and others, 'Negative Transgender-Related Media Messages Are Associated with Adverse Mental Health Outcomes in a Multistate Study of Transgender Adults', *LGBT Health*, 8 1 (2021), 32–41. <https://doi.org/10.1089/lgbt.2020.0279>

⁵ Abreu, R. L., Sostre, J. P., Gonzalez, K. A., Lockett, G. M., Matsuno, E., & Mosley, D. V. (2022). Impact of gender-affirming care bans on transgender and gender diverse youth: Parental figures' perspective. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 36(5), 643–652. <https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000987>

⁶ Flores, A. R., Meyer, I. H., Langton, L., & Herman, J. L. (2021). Gender Identity Disparities in Criminal Victimization: National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017–2018. *American Journal of public health*, 111(4), 726–729. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2020.306099>

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Green Bay
Kenosha
La Crosse
Madison
Milwaukee
Superior
Wausau

From: C OB <obric2501@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Oct 12, 2023 at 9:30 AM
Subject: Bills 479 and 480
To: <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>

Good morning, Members of the Senate Committee on Colleges and Universities, Senator Cabral-Guevera, Senator Testin, Senator Felzkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, and Senator Carpenter,

I, Colleen O'Brien, am a registered voter/neighbor/community member in Madison Wisconsin. I have lived here for over five years and am a friend of the LGBTQ community.

I care about this bill because I believe in bodily autonomy, increased medical access, and the expertise of doctors.

As a member of this community, I urge you to vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480 as they are likely to

... cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

... negatively impact the well-being of my community members. It is already difficult enough to access medical care. Please do not add unnecessary challenges to families of transgender individuals.

... cause medical providers in areas where there are already too few, to leave the state for areas where they are allowed to practice in alignment with their medical training and professional ethics.

... insert your own example of the harm these bills will cause if they are passed.

I know you share in my care for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you **OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480 today**. You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Colleen O'Brien
53704

From: **Benji Roe** <Benjamin.Roe@viventhealth.org>
Date: Thu, Oct 12, 2023 at 9:31 AM
Subject: Testimony
To: testimony@fairwisconsin.com <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>

As a Third-gendered member of the LGBTQ+ community, a former minister, and someone who was bullied to the point of attempting to end one's own life, I must say that these bill proposals are just another attack at our community at large. The language in these bills is vague enough to not only attack our community and our youth, robbing them of life-sustaining, preventative care, but it is vague enough that it could apply to all youth regardless of their gender or sexual orientation. While I do agree that big decisions like surgery, that are irreversible, should be postponed until the individual's frontal cortex is formed enough to make these decisions on their own, I also believe that other forms of gender affirming care to be left to the parents and the medical community to decide, not a politician! Unless you are a politician with a medical degree, you should not be making any decisions or laws regarding healthcare including but not limited to gender affirming care, abortion, prophylaxis medications, etc.

This statement is my own and does not represent the views of my company.

Benji Roe

Prevention Specialist

Pronouns: Rolling Pronouns
633C W. Wisconsin Ave. Appleton, WI 54911
Office: 920-733-2068 ex. 3401
Cell: 920-858-0689 (Text Friendly)
Toll Free: 800-359-9272

From: **Maureen Cassidy** <mcassidyphotography@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Oct 12, 2023 at 9:31 AM
Subject: OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480
To: <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>

Good morning, Members of the Senate Committee on Health, Senator Cabral-Guevera, Senator Testin, Senator Felzkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, and Senator Carpenter,

I, Maureen Cassidy, am a registered voter in Dane County. I have lived here for 15 years and am a

- Member of the LGBTQ community
- Parent to LGBTQ individuals
- A business owner
- An organizer
- A person of faith
- A community leader

As a member of this community, **I urge you to vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480**, as they are likely to

... cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

... negatively impact the well-being of my community members. It is already difficult enough to access medical care. Please do not add unnecessary challenges to families of transgender individuals.

... cause medical providers in areas with too few to leave the state for areas where they are allowed to practice in alignment with their medical training and professional ethics.

I know you share in my care for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you **OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480 today**. You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Maureen Cassidy 53704

--

she, her, hers

608.358.2871

Voted Best of Madison 9 years in a row

From: **Mary Kovell** <mary.kovell@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Oct 12, 2023 at 9:33 AM
Subject: Anti-trans bills
To: testimony@fairwisconsin.com <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Mary Kovell, and I am a resident of the City of Madison, in Dane County. I've lived in Wisconsin for 15 years with my husband and teenage son.

I am writing to urge you to vote **NO** on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because I strongly believe people should be encouraged to embrace their own identities and be proud of who they are.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,
Mary Kovell

Middleton, WI 53562

From: **Andrew Buhl** <andr.buhl@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Oct 12, 2023 at 9:39 AM
Subject: Oppose SB 479 and SB 480
To: <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Andrew Buhl, and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 6 years and have been proud to build a life and home in this wonderful state.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because I believe they will lead to undue harm both to our LGBTQ+ youth and to the allies who support them. These bills unnecessarily stigmatize gender-affirming care and paint a picture of black and white that is not considerate of the diverse spectrum of individuals who need access to healthcare or to the broad spectrum of healthcare available to those individuals.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Andrew Buhl

Madison WI, 53711

Regards,

From: **M. Park Hunter** <park@itisgood.org>
Date: Thu, Oct 12, 2023 at 9:49 AM
Subject: Vote NO on SB 479 and SB 480
To: <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to urge our Wisconsin state legislators to vote AGAINST SB 479 (allowing doctors who provide gender-affirming care to be sued) and SB 480 (banning transgender medical care).

I am Rev. M. Park Hunter, a pastor in The United Methodist Church. I currently serve as North East District Superintendent providing oversight to 76 United Methodist churches from Beaver Dam, Sheboygan, and Fond du Lac in the south, through the Oshkosh, Appleton, and Green Bay areas, and on up to Marinette, Crandon, and Niagara. I formerly served as lead pastor at Mosinee UMC and Onalaska UMC.

I am writing to speak from my personal experience. I have had trans and LGBTQ members in the congregations I have served.

At Onalaska UMC, one young man in his thirties transitioned to female while I was the pastor. The congregation was supportive and loving during the process, which made a tremendous difference. From a sad and subdued young man who often struggled with thoughts of suicide, she became a bubbly and outgoing young woman who was finally comfortable in her own skin.

Years after I left Mosinee UMC, I was contacted by the mother of a young girl I remembered from my time at church. Now in her teens, she was struggling with her gender identity. Some family members and friends told her these thoughts were sinful and she was going to hell. The young person was self-harming and suicidal. When asked by Mom who they would speak to, they asked to talk to Pastor Park. It was a humbling experience to communicate with this young person and reassure them that God loved them, no matter what. God made them who they were, and God doesn't make junk. The young person was greatly comforted by this faith perspective.

In scripture, Jesus tells us to "Love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34). The proposed bills are not "loving" to our fellow citizens who are uncomfortable with their gender identity. Passing these restrictions would lead to greater depression and suicide risk for many, as multiple scientific studies have shown.

Jesus also tells us to "do to others as you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12). Republicans often speak of individual rights and liberties. The proposed bills would restrict the liberties of others to make their own medical decisions and provide medical care to clients, in a way that Republicans would object to if similar arbitrary laws singled out specific issues like cosmetic surgery.

Again, I urge Wisconsin legislators to vote AGAINST SB 479 and SB 480.

Thank you for your consideration. In Christ's name,

Rev. M. Park Hunter

parkhunter@gmail.com

=====

M. Park Hunter
755 William Street #4
De Pere, WI 54115

608-799-4484 cell

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Alex Dudek** <akdudek@wisc.edu>

Date: Thu, Oct 12, 2023 at 10:06 AM

Subject: Opposition to SB479 and SB480

To: testimony@fairwisconsin.com <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Alex Dudek and I am a resident of Dane County. I've lived in Wisconsin for 10 years and I am a nurse who is proud to care for all Wisconsin residents.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. These bills will cost lives if they are passed. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

Furthermore, I am opposed to these bills because my professional and ethical imperative as a nurse is to take the best possible care of my patients - and these bills would prohibit that. It is unconscionable for the state of Wisconsin to interfere in the patient-provider relationship in this way and these bills must not be passed.

Sincerely,

Alex Dudek
Dane County, Zip 53705

From: **Testimony Submissions** <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>
Date: Thu, Oct 12, 2023 at 10:22 AM
Subject: Re: Templates for testimony SB479 and 480
To: <dee.zwaga@gmail.com>

Hi,

Thank you for submitting testimony against SB 479 and SB 480. If you submitted testimony after 9:30am on October 12th, we will try our best to include it in the official bill record but cannot guarantee that it will make it in. Please consider sending your testimony directly to the members of the Senate Committee on Health. You can find their emails [here](#).

Please make sure that your testimony is addressed to the **entire** Senate Committee on Health and that it clearly states that you oppose SB 479 and/or SB 480. Please include your name and city (a full street address is not required).

SB 479 - Allows doctors to be sued for practicing gender affirming care.

SB 480 - Bans all forms of gender affirming care for people under the age of 18.

If you need help figuring out what to put in your testimony, [here is a link](#) to a template document which we encourage you to use! But remember, telling your personal story is best.

Thank you for your support!

Team Fair Wisconsin

From: **Lenard Markman** <lenmarkman@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Oct 12, 2023 at 10:26 AM
Subject: Opposition to SB 480 and 479
To: <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>

We are Dr Lenard Markman and Dr Leslie Markman. We have practiced Family Medicine for 25 years in Amherst WI.

We are writing you to vote NO on SB 479 and SB 480.

A holistic approach to healthcare requires confidentially addressing the physical and psychological needs of our patients. Appropriate medical care requires evaluating and reviewing all options. Decisions are best made by the patient, parents, and a team of dedicated healthcare professionals who are up to date with the most recent and ever changing advances in medicine.

Best medical practice is a continuous learning process. Experts in respective healthcare fields work together to make consensus guidelines which direct physicians and patients to the most appropriate care.

Bills prohibiting physicians to act in strict confidence and prohibiting physicians from providing standard of care are simply not acceptable to anyone.

These bills are hurtful to many of our most vulnerable patients who already have faced discrimination so often and in so many different ways.

Young physicians today will be discouraged from staying in WI if SB 479 is passed. Medicine already has strict peer review and medical board oversight. Adding additional legislative bureaucracy to practice the medical standard of care will lead to long complicated lawsuits and interfere with the right to privacy and confidentiality for our patients. Sincerely, Lenard Markman DO

Leslie Markman DO
4008 Tomorrow River Road
Amherst WI 54406

Sent from my iPhone

From: **BRENDA ROEHR** <broehr9314@aol.com>
Date: Thu, Oct 12, 2023 at 10:44 AM
Subject: Vote NO to Senate bills 479 and 480
To: <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Brenda Roehr and I am a resident of Oak Creek, I've lived in Wisconsin my whole life. I am a wife, a mother of two children and a nurse. I have a son and a daughter. My son is a TransMan and come out to us in his early 20's. When he came out to us it made a lot to things that happened in his life make sense. Here is our story, as a toddler my son did not want to wear dresses would fight me tooth and nail sometimes I one sometimes it just wasn't important. He only wanted to shop in "the boys" department for his clothes which we did. If he was provided with "girls" clothes he would politely accept but never wear. As a child in preschool the kids called him a girl he argued with him that he was not a girl but in fact was a boy/girl and he was going to show them, how.? We will never know as his preschool teacher ended the conversation. When he received his first communion at the age of 8 didn't understand why I was making him wear dress and he couldn't wear a tux like the rest of the boys. As a young child his choice of toys were GI Joes, army men, trucks, basketball, baseball, soccer etc. I wanted him to read Little Woman and wanted to read Captain Underpants and Treasure Island. When he was ten the neighborhood kids were all going home to get their suits on when he announced he didn't need to as he already had is trunks on to which the other kids laughed at him and made fun of him and he came home in tears. I could go on as there are many more stories just like this. In middle school bullying became so bad he conformed and began wearing "girls clothes". That didn't stop the bullying completely. High School was more accepting but still not great. When he was in his early 20's he wrote a letter to us expressing his depression. We encouraged him to seek therapy which he did. He was initially diagnosed with bipolar disorder of which he received treatment. One day he called us together and explained to us that he was transgender. We were not familiar with that so guess what we did. WE Educated ourselves and in the process of doing so it made his life make so much sense and at the same time made me sad I was uneducated when he was a child and couldn't help him through his feelings. My son is now a very successful adult, happy well adjusted and getting married next year. His therapist told him that the reason he was able to be as well adjusted as he was, was due to the fact he had good frontal lobe development from being accepted by his family for who he was due to acceptance from his family at such a young age. We did not realize that we were doing anything special. We were just supporting our child whose happiness meant everything in the world to us.

I am writing to urge you to toe NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills as it is another example of government interference into what should be a personal medical decision between a patient and their doctors. I don't believe any of you are medical experts in the field of transgender care so I don't believe you understand the consequences of bills like these.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should be made between patients, their doctors and their families.

Sincerely,
Brenda Roehr

Sent from my iPad

From: **Mirer, Anna** <Anna.Mirer@aah.org>
Date: Thu, Oct 12, 2023 at 10:46 AM
Subject: Senate Bill 479
To: testimony@fairwisconsin.com <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>

Anna G. Mirer, MD, PhD, MPH
5027 W Midland Dr.
Greenfield, WI 53219

October 12, 2023

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health:

My name is Anna G. Mirer, MD, PhD, MPH. I am a resident of Greenfield, and I have lived in Wisconsin for 15 years. I am a family physician and have spent my career providing primary care to underserved rural and urban communities in our state. I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480.

Doctors who are compelled to practice bad medicine will leave Wisconsin. I will leave. I will leave the state that has been my home, and the community where I have raised my children, if I cannot provide my patients with basic primary care here. And I am only one of many. I will assume you are already aware of the dire shortage of primary care physicians in our state and the harm that will come to Wisconsinites everywhere when your legislation provokes an exodus of physicians. You also know that The American Academy of Physicians, The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Physicians, and the American Medical Association have all upheld that gender affirming care is basic medicine. Respectfully none of you is qualified to determine the standard of medical care and if you're confused on that point you do not belong on a Committee on Health. If you insist on this political theater, your audience will walk out.

Sincerely,

Anna G. Mirer, MD, PhD, MPH
Greenfield, WI 53219

From: **Anna Wieser** <anna.wieser@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Oct 12, 2023 at 10:46 AM
Subject: my testimony to OPPOSE AB378
To: <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>

Good morning, Members of the Senate Committee on Health, Senator Cabral-Guevera, Senator Testin, Senator Felzkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, and Senator Carpenter,

I, Anna Wieser, am a registered voter/neighbor/community member in Madison. I have lived here for 7 years and am a friend and family member to LGBTQ individuals.

I care about this bill/measure because I cannot imagine my identity being inconsistent with my physical body. I have chronic illness and know what it is for my body to betray me. If I can get treatment for my recognized chronic illness, I want those I love to have access to medical support that helps them exist as a healthy and happy person in our community.

As a member of this community, I urge you to vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480 as they are likely to

... cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

... negatively impact the well-being of my community members. It is already difficult enough to access medical care. Please do not add unnecessary challenges to families of transgender individuals.

... cause medical providers in areas where there are already too few, to leave the state for areas where they are allowed to practice in alignment with their medical training and professional ethics.

... insert your own example of the harm these bills will cause if they are passed.

I know you share in my care for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480 today. You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Anna wieser, 53704

From: Adrian Hanrahan <adriankhanrahan@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Oct 12, 2023 at 10:48 AM
Subject: Testimony Against SB 479 and 480
To: <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>

Members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Adrian Hanrahan. I live in Milwaukee and have been a Wisconsin resident for 22 years. I am writing in strong opposition to Senate Bills 479 and 480.

Senate Bills 479 and 480 are purely based on irrational fear. It has been found time and time again that transition benefits trans people, including youth. Regret rates are low, potential side effects are as minimal and manageable as any other hormone-based treatment (which are used for many health conditions in cisgender people as well), and crisis behaviors like drug use and self harm decrease when people are able to transition. No doctor who takes proper measures to educate their patients and obtain informed consent should be penalized for providing gender affirming care. It is much like any other healthcare.

I'd like to share a personal perspective. I have noticed that many who oppose this care like to talk about detransition (returning to life as one's assigned gender) as proof that transitioning is a bad idea. Well, I have detransitioned, and I am tired of seeing my experiences stereotyped and used against trans people. Not all of us who detransition regret transitioning. I certainly don't. Many of us still consider ourselves part of the transgender community because of our shared experiences. I certainly do.

I transitioned from female to male and then back to female. Many who oppose transgender rights would hold me up as evidence that girls are being brainwashed. They would paternalistically lament my wasted beauty and see me as a damaged, failed woman. I do not feel that way. Transitioning offered me a deeper understanding of my femininity, my masculinity, and my womanhood. I honestly feel more confident, more beautiful, and in many ways more feminine now than I did prior to transitioning the first time. This is not to say that there are no obstacles (shaving so often is annoying!), but those are manageable, often temporary, and worth the desirable physical changes and new perspective that transitioning gave me.

Many other people detransition because of financial or social considerations, not because they no longer identify as the gender to which they were transitioning. Keep this in mind.

Actual regret rates are low. The way to decrease them further is not to ban medical transition for those who want it. It is to increase public awareness of gender diversity and what transition is/can be. It is to make people understand that it is okay if they do not know how they identify and it is okay if their identity changes over time. This way, people can figure out their identities and desires with less stress and urgency, and they can make informed decisions.

As for those of us who have already transitioned and detransitioned, we deserve support, not weaponization.

I don't want to be flown from state to state to go on a tirade against doctors and vouch for bills that make teenagers' lives worse. I don't want to be quoted to prove that transness is illegitimate. I want trans and cis people alike to accept both my continued identification with transness and my decision to detransition. I want people to support me as I take detransition steps like getting electrolysis. More than anything, I want the government to stay out of my (and everyone else's) personal, medical decisions. Nothing more, nothing less.

Please, oppose these bills, and keep my story in mind when people try to use detransition to prove that gender affirming care is a bad thing. Most detransitioners support this care and support the trans community.

Adrian Hanrahan

From: **John and Kristie Halverson** <thehalversons@hotmail.com>
Date: Thu, Oct 12, 2023 at 10:48 AM
Subject: SB 479 and SB 480
To: testimony@fairwisconsin.com <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>

Regarding SB 479 and SB 480

My son is currently hospitalized for a lung condition, and this is why I am submitting written testimony instead of coming to the capitol. He has asthma, which leads to recurring pneumonia, which has now led to at least two weeks of hospitalization.

I don't think that people who don't wear binders can understand how necessary they are for people who DO wear binders. But binders are a temporary solution for people whose gender dysphoria is so acute that they think about undergoing major surgery. There is no legislation that can measure my son's degree of gender dysphoria.

I listened to hours of testimony last week for the House Bills, where I heard many opinions and some Scripture. Please now, hear the following facts from my 17 year old:

- NO professionals pushed ANY medical interventions. I am there for all of the appointments. THEY believe I am a capable parent.
- My son's gender-affirming top surgery was already cancelled this summer by St. Mary's. Had the Catholic Church not interfered, my son would not be in the hospital RIGHT NOW.
- My son is missing his senior year due to his lung condition.
- Anybody who treats my son is HELPING him. From the respiratory therapist to the plastic surgeon.

Finally:

SB 479 allows a patient or their family to sue a doctor for providing gender affirming health care. So stop it. I need these doctors for my son.

SB 480 forces transgender children to go through puberty, which traumatizing. I know because I watched my son suffer, while none of us could give words yet to what was wrong.

Shame on anybody who is for this bill.

Sincerely and without remorse,
Kristie Halverson

From: **MARGIE STONEMAN** <margiestoneman@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Thu, Oct 12, 2023 at 10:55 AM
Subject: Please VOTE NO to Bills SB479 and SB480
To: Testimony Submissions <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>

Please note NO to harmful bills SB479 and SB480 that would limit doctor's work and not support trans youth. These bills are discriminatory and would be harmful to many people.

Marjorie Stoneman
4148614126
393 Eagle Court
Whitewater, WI 53190

From: **Megan A. Ehlert** <Megan.Ehlert@appleton.org>
Date: Thu, Oct 12, 2023 at 11:05 AM
Subject: Vote NO
To: testimony@fairwisconsin.com <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>
Cc: R.J. Ehlert <rjehlert@hotmail.com>

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Megan Ehlert. I am a resident of Appleton, WI. I am 39 years old and have called Wisconsin home for my entire life. I am a spouse, parent to a child under the age of 18, and active participant in my local government and Sweet Adelines chorus.

Please vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. I currently work in public health and formerly worked in inpatient psychiatry and see firsthand the harm caused by withholding access to gender affirming care to young people. Children and teens with the collaboration of their guardians and supports systems must make the decisions to fit who they are and who they can be.

Suicidal ideation is not a cry for attention, it is a call for connection. Severing the connection youth have to access gender affirming care by threatening the practices of providers creates a cycle of hopelessness. Please show LGBTQ+ youth that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin by voting NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480.

Sincerely,

Megan Ehlert

Appleton, 54915

From: **Yaseen Najeeb** <yaseesnajeeb@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Oct 12, 2023 at 11:15 AM
Subject: OPPOSE MEDICAL CARE BAN
To: <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Yaseen, and I am a resident of Mequon. I've lived in Wisconsin for 25 years and currently work as an EMT.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because every individual deserves healthcare. This is a human rights violation.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Yaseen
Ozaukee County, 53093

From: **Max Mohrl** <maxwellclc@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Oct 12, 2023 at 11:39 AM
Subject: Action against bill
To: <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>

To committee members

SB 479 is a horrible bill criminalizes the hardest workers and makes people doing back alley surgeries more likely and damaging to everyone. The reason high schools do no kids left behind is because it's more damaging to the economy and society when no one cares

SB 480 is also evil and gender affirming care is more than just top and bottom surgery

My name is Max I live in Woodbury Minnesota

So I'm right next to Wisconsin and I have family living there too who are young and seeing bills like this is scary. I live so closely to state that doesn't want people to live and doesn't want some of the best people I know to be happy. Truly disgusting that the rights of people even come into play like this.

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is DeeJay Zwaga, and I am a resident of Madison, WI. I've lived in Wisconsin for 28 years and I am training health professional here in Wisconsin. I grew up in a family who, for generations, struggled to get access to medical care. I got to see first hand, how devastating that was for my family. I also got to see the devastating impact of discrimination of healthcare system on my family. Knowing how vitally important access to safe care from a compassionate care team, I strive for this standard as I continue my training in healthcare.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because gender affirming care is lifesaving. Transgender youth and adults experience much higher rates of poor mental, physical, and behavioral health outcomes. This is a pressing and emergent health crisis. Without a doubt, access to gender affirming care has consistently shown to substantially reduce the chances that a trans patient will experience depression or suicidal ideation and improve health outcomes. Beyond the health evidence, countless testimonies show how invaluable gender affirming care is to personal well-being. I urge you to please listen to people as they share their stories with you. These stories matter. People are being vulnerable and open, and I hope you are willing to hear what they have to say.

Additionally, as health professionals, the integrity of our profession centers patient safety, autonomy, and serving in the best interest of our patients. Medical decisions should be made as a shared decision-making process between parents, trans youth, and their care team or trans adults; their loved ones, and their care team. The threat of lawsuit via SB480 directly opposes our oath as healthcare professionals and creates an environment where gender affirming care practices will be restricted. This creates a space where healthcare professionals cannot safely guide care for trans patients.

These policies directly oppose the core tenants of medicine to do no harm. I fear that if we create a system where trans patients cannot access safe medical care, that they will further avoid our healthcare system. Consistent evidence shows that providers decline to see transgender patients, refuse gender affirming care, or lack training and knowledge to provide care. There is not enough gender affirming services, so we should be supporting the healthcare professionals who do provide such valuable and life-saving care, rather than creating policies that would restrict practice of the few who do. We have an obligation to safely provide care for people, not just to better health outcomes, but to help people live a thriving and fulfilling life. We cannot hope to accomplish this without gender-affirming care.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

From: **Lisa Hajek** <theeladyjane@hotmail.com>
Date: Thu, Oct 12, 2023 at 11:43 AM
Subject: SB 479 AND SB 480--OPPOSE LEGISLATION AGAINST GENDER
AFFIRMING CARE AND SERVICES
To: testimony@fairwisconsin.com <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>

I would like to state I oppose any legislation that restricts any legislation that may dictate what a person chooses to do with their bodies, including youth. And I am not interest in any legislation that removes a person's right in any form or fashion; I only support laws that allow further rights for people and the choices they make for their bodies. Therefore, I am opposed to the legislation listed in the subject line.

Thank you.

Lisa Hajek, Madison, WI
124 W Washington Ave, unit 207
53703

From: **Marissa Gehrke** <mbgehrke09@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Oct 12, 2023 at 12:08 PM
Subject: Vote No
To: <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Marissa Gehrke, and I am a resident of Fitchburg. I've lived in Wisconsin for 33 years with my family and am a graduate of UW-Madison.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because they will hurt so many young people in our state. If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,
Marissa Gehrke
Fitchburg, WI, 53711

From: **Maureen McKnight** <mamc4329@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Oct 12, 2023 at 12:20 PM
Subject: Please Support Trans People and the Doctors Who Care for Them
To: <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>

Dear Senate Committee on Health,

I write to implore you to protect transpeople's healthcare choices and the medical professionals who provide them. Wisconsin politicians should not interfere with patient care at all. Transgender people are worthy of protection from government overreach. Politicians engaged in this irrational moral panic about gender should pay attention instead to funding early education and childcare as well as K12 and higher education in Wisconsin.

Maureen McKnight
Shorewood, WI
mamc4329@gmail.com

From: **Madeline Tyner** <tynermad@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Oct 12, 2023 at 12:27 PM
Subject: Vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480
To: testimony@fairwisconsin.com <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Madeline Tyner, and I am a resident of the City of Fitchburg. I've lived in Wisconsin for eight years with my wife, Hayley, who was born and raised in Wisconsin.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am strongly opposed to these bills because gender-affirming care for children is critical, life-saving healthcare. The right of families to access healthcare for their children, and to make educated, science-supported decisions regarding said healthcare with their medical team, absolutely must not be taken away. I don't believe that politicians should interfere with the personal, private medical decisions of Wisconsin residents. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin. These bills, if passed, will inevitably end up costing some children their lives.

Furthermore, as someone who received gender-affirming care in adulthood, I know just how critical that healthcare is in helping a person achieve full personhood, happiness, mental well-being, and self-expression. Please do not take this essential right to healthcare away from Wisconsinites. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Madeline Tyner
City of Fitchburg, 53711

From: **Liz Lusk** <lizlusk51@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Oct 12, 2023 at 1:14 PM
Subject: SB 480
To: <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>

Dear Senators,

This bill, SB 480 is a needless cruelty.
The kind of treatment that is provided to trans youth is none of your business and is best dealt with between the youth, their family and their doctor, Also, treating transsgender care as some sort of "exception" makes no sense.
The kind of medical care we are talking about here is: provision of mental health services (who is against this?). The only medicine intervention that would be provided is begun at the time of puberty and has no permanent effect. Instead the medicine puts a pause on secondary sex characteristics in puberty. These medicines are also used for various other purposes such as treating prostatic cancer, endometriosis, and breast cancer. Here they remove the need for future surgeries and can relieve anxiety and other mental health issues.
I hope that when you learn about both the state of legal requirements currently in place and learn about the harm that your stepping into a youth's personal medical treatment via SB480 will cause, you should, YOU MUST withdraw this needless and harmful bill.

Thank you.
Sincerely,

Liz Lusk
452 Virginia Terrace
Madison, WI 53726

From: **Hal Evensen** <hal.evensen@tds.net>
Date: Thu, Oct 12, 2023 at 1:47 PM
Subject: testimony against bills
To: <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Hal Evensen, and I am a resident of Verona. I've lived in Wisconsin for 25 years and have done volunteer work for families of children with special needs.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because I have worked with youth in both camp and church settings, and more than one were transgender. These bills add unnecessary stress to their lives, toward questionable ends. God calls us to be on the side of those who are most vulnerable—and I believe that restricting access to medical care for our transgender youth is a violation of their rights and dangerous to their wellbeing.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Harold T. (Hal) Evensen

Verona WI, 53593

--
Hal Evensen
hal.evensen@tds.net

From: **Lyric Tanksley Itinerant** <lyric.itinerant@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Oct 12, 2023 at 2:48 PM
Subject: Senate Bills 479 and 480 Testimony
To: <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>

To the members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Lyric Itinerant, and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for over a decade now, except for a couple years after I graduated college and moved away for my first post-college job. I ended up moving back because I loved my friends and community here in Madison so dearly.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because they do more harm than good. In fact, I don't see how they do any good at all. I'm afraid medical care for everyone will decline if doctors who are afraid that giving the best, scientifically-backed treatment to their patients will get them sued move to other states.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,
Lyric Itinerant
Madison WI, 53719

From: **Katie Hayden** <katie.a.s.hayden@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Oct 12, 2023 at 3:01 PM
Subject: Re: Testimony for SB 479 and SB 480
To: Testimony Submissions <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>, Susan "Sue Moo" Neeley <sue.z.q.83@gmail.com>, <sue@gsafewi.org>

Hello again,
I came today but wasn't able to stay to present my testimony. If it's not too late, here is the new/improved version. If it is too late, no worries at all!
Thanks for all you're doing,
Katie

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Katie Hayden, and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 33 years and I am a public school teacher and parent. I am here to urge you to **vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480.**

These bills address medical care, which is inherently a very personal matter. My medical care is determined by me and my doctor. Your medical care is determined by you and your doctor. I have not invited you into my exam room, just as you have not invited me in yours. In my case, in your case, and in the case of trans youth, medical care is determined after thoughtful consideration by patients, their families and their medical providers based on symptoms, need, and evidence-based medical best practice.

The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, and other leading medical authorities support gender-affirming care for youth as medical best practice. This bill aims to take away choices from children and their families, and goes against evidence-based care. If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because gender-affirming care saves lives.

Sincerely,
Katie Hayden
Madison, WI 53716

From: **Stephanie Beach** <stephaniemckaylabeach1979@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Oct 12, 2023 at 3:28 PM
Subject: SB 479 and SB 480 - written testimony
To: <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>

Dear Representatives:

We should have the right to gender-affirming care. It is not fair that heterosexual people have all their rights and can exercise them at any time, but people who are in the transgender communities have no rights. Society doesn't understand how it feels to live with gender dysphoria. In my situation, it causes a lot of discomfort and distress, hatred towards my own appearance, depression, and suicide attempts are all things I and other transgender people experience.

For me, experiencing gender dysphoria causes problems in everyday life. Social norms dictate what I can and cannot express. I am pressured a lot in public because I dress as a woman, use the women's bathroom, and act more feminine. I get disparaging looks all the time because of the way I am. I don't have a choice about who I am, and I feel freer than ever before because of gender-affirming care. It is imperative that I continue gender-affirming care from my doctors so that I can minimize my discomfort, distress, and self-hatred because of my gender dysphoria. With Gender affirming care all these issues have been lessened.

I urge you to recognize the discrimination that is happening with the introduction of these bills. Without Gender Affirming care we won't be physically or mentally healthy. I believe that minors should continue to be able to transition if their parent agrees, and it is under the care of doctors. Everyone should have the same rights as humans and be part of society. Equality for all.

Stephanie Beach

Wausau Wi

I am Peter Tarson, a high school student and close friend to many families directly impacted by the bill SB480, which would ban transgender minors from physically transitioning. I would like to beg Wisconsin to refrain from passing this bill lest it deny people so dear to me their humanity, belonging, and safety in public.

I understand that you wish to protect people by restricting transgender healthcare. But you are not protecting people, only an image of them, an image that causes them to squirm in falsehood. It frightens you to understand a child's nausea at a chest that is false for your internal God-woven beauty, to feel the needle bristle violation of facial hair, to feel a skirt that throws you behind waves of overwhelm. The feeling you feel when you imagine if you had transitioned is the feeling they feel every day they do not have trans healthcare.

You've already heard many speakers who have detransitioned share their experiences, their needs to alter their bodies again to find themselves and their struggles with a binary transition understanding. I understand the impulse to, holding this anguish, see it as the only anguish and not hold space for the endless contradictory realities of all peoples' genders and truths. But less than one in twenty trans people detransition due to any change in desired physical body from when they transitioned. That's right. One in twenty. Dysphoria for people does not "go away" in adulthood, it is something people resign themselves to through waves of powerlessness and fear of sharing their truths. The only way we can build a society in which all people do not have to hide themselves behind layers of pain is to affirm and celebrate all of these people, whether they transition to one gender or want to transition back or elsewhere. We must continue to allow and develop transition so that all humans can build the contradictory, ever-changing bodies that are affirming to them, trans and detrans, and post-trans, and transhuman. We must not hide people beneath natal sex frameworks, or any framework that denies humanity's endless beauty.

To admit that transgender people deserve medical care and affirmation is to accept God's offering, enumerated repeatedly throughout the scriptures, that we may share in the act of creation. We become close to Him by embracing our mental capacity to build and discover His love in the world. How else was it when St. Peter founded the Church in Rome and Antioch or Abraham traveled across Mesopotamia? How can we forget this? Will we not build our bodies, words, and minds as His temple by celebrating how they connect us to others and our inner truths? To ban transgender medical care is to force our children into a Miltonian Pandaemonium, where their bodies pressed into a mold of volcanic mercury that standardizes and regiments.

To allow children to reforge their bodies in the image of their inner beauty, to explore the endless layers, contradictions, and flowerings of the truth of their genders, is to relinquish control and embrace the fact that people's inner poetries, narratives, discoveries are inextricable from their bodily, tender vulnerability. It is an admission that the pain that they experience is real, that invisible powerlessness can be worthy of love and care and that our knowledge and creativity are worthy of crafting their inner palaces. You aim to restrict neurodivergent minors from transitioning to hide their inner beauty and capacity to author themselves, to escape from the reality that all minds as well as all bodies can create harmony through their truest expressions. I am neurodivergent myself and have faced medical consent violation around it, and I am horrified by this. Not because I hate any of you, but because I see the beauty that, by repressing others, you aim to repress in yourselves.

I understand that the inherent duality of vulnerability in oneself and authority over one's voice and truth is terrifying. We fear for our children and long to protect them, but denying them the right to access medical care, reducing it to fixed definitions of what bodies and experiences are real, is deeply harmful. We fear what will happen if we reveal our own needs to transgress, to feel the love we all wish we could and craft the wonders we all long to create. But I urge you to release into your fear and into the community of thousands of trans people who are calling for humanity, not to be cast into the shadows and

forced to squirm powerlessly. I urge you to sniff and cherish the blossom of bodily and social expression made by the decomposed remnants of our genetics, the petal layers of our minds and hearts, and the aromatic scents of a gift, a sharing with the universe. Trans healthcare gives trans youth the ability to remain youth, not hyper-aware of their sexual bodies by their overwhelming pain.

The urban elitism that has cost Wisconsin so many jobs is not about tolerance, it is about withholding care economically and socially through set standards and shame. Trans healthcare keeps our communities safe for our children, which will prevent coastal emigration and renew the Rust Belt. The Republic of Front Porches will not be dead when all can sit on the porch. Only by extending love to all people can we renew our community.

Morgan Gald

Regarding Senate Bill 480

October 12, 2023

IN OPPOSITION

My name is Morgan Gald. I am writing as both personally, as a concerned citizen of the state of Wisconsin, and as a community healthcare provider. I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and am a Certified Transgender Care Therapist. I provide outpatient mental health therapy at a non-profit clinic in Appleton, Wisconsin.

I am testifying against SB 480 as a mental health professional who has seen the real, devastating effects that are the consequence of individuals not being able to access necessary, life-saving care as prescribed by a team of medical professionals. I have worked directly with the population targeted by this bill on a daily basis since 2019. I have worked with many gender diverse teenagers and their families and have seen both the devastating consequences that rejection has as well as the incredible impact loving and acceptance has on a child.

Policing what medical care a person is able to access in response to political propaganda is causing significant, observable harm. I have seen it day in and day out for the past four years. I have watched as these young people are crushed by the rejection of their family members, schools, and community simply for existing and being themselves. While writing this, I recalled a number of heartbreaking stories involving both my clients and my personal friends. Out of respect for individual privacy, I will not share any details of these stories. I can share, however, that I will never forget the image or the sound of a child sobbing so loudly in my office, feeling crushed, rejected, and hurt by their parent for simply seeking to be loved for who they are.

Bills such as the one being discussed here today, are a response to misinformation and fear mongering that are simply not at all reflective of the reality of gender affirming care for adolescents. Every major medical and professional organization, including the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, American Academy of Nursing, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Counseling Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Psychological Association, American Public Health Association, and National Association of Social Workers all support the evidence-based practice of providing gender affirming treatment for minors. WPATH, or the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, is an international organization comprised of the leading experts from across the globe who research types of interventions, the impact of these treatments, and compile a detailed, thorough set of practice guidelines that all professionals, including myself, use when working with a gender diverse child or adolescent. To become a Certified Transgender Care Therapist, I attended 56 hours of training from

experts across the nation and even internationally. This is all to say that these decisions are not made lightly and involves collaboration of skilled professionals from multiple disciplines.

The data clearly shows the significant impact medical care for trans youth has on well-being. According to a study completed by the American Medical Association in 2022, youth between the ages of 13 - 20 who received medical interventions reported a 73% reduction in suicidality and 60% reduction in depressive symptoms. Transgender peers of the same age who did not receive medical interventions actually experienced rates of depression and suicidality at 2-3 times above their baseline. It is simple, gender affirming care saves lives.

I strongly urge you to vote no today on SB 480. As a healthcare professional, friend, and human, I strongly oppose removing access to critical, life-saving treatment from the gender expansive youth in our state.

Thank you,

Morgan Gald

To the Senate Committee on Health:

I am not transgender. As far as I know, I am not the mother of a trans child. I am not a doctor, or a lawyer, or a politician.

I'm the type of person the Senate keeps saying they want to attract to Wisconsin: a middle-class, married soccer mom and homeowner, parenting a seven-year-old boy and hoping to be pregnant again soon. I'm a devout every-Sunday Christian who is active in her community and volunteers at her child's school. I'm descended from a long line of Republicans, including my great-grandfather, who was elected to city council as a Republican in 1950s Florida. I moved here in 2014 from Ohio with my husband intending to live the rest of our lives here. My parents and younger sister quickly followed us, and I'm working on getting my youngest sister to move here, as well. Wisconsin isn't just my home—I'm on a one-woman crusade to convince everyone to move here.

I'm writing to you today, not as a representative of a political advocacy group or a political action committee, but simply as a parent who hopes her children will go to UW, move back home, and one day raise their own children here.

I am asking you NOT to advance SB 479 and SB 480.

I may not be a scientist, but I understand the basics of gender, and I understand that it doesn't always line up with a person's genitalia, or with what little of a person's genitalia a doctor sees when that person comes out of the womb. That's not rocket science. In fact, it's biology, which my dad taught at a state university in Ohio and which I grew up knowing more about than most kids my age. Biologists have long accepted that gender identity and sex characteristics are distinct, in the same way that biologists have also long known that gay relationships are common and evolutionarily necessarily in the natural world.

More importantly, as a parent, medical decisions about my children should be *exclusively* between myself, my husband, our children, and their pediatricians. There is no room for the Wisconsin legislature in my family's personal lives. You cannot claim to support limited government and then allow the government to make decisions for me about my children's healthcare. If one of my children ends up being transgender, then our family, in consultation with our physicians, will decide what medical care they require. With respect, *we will not ask the Senate Committee on Health to weigh in.*

I know that other testimonies from other constituents will be sharing moving personal stories and compelling statistics and medical evidence, all of which support the conclusion that these bills are discriminatory and wrong. I'm not going to do that, because I'm not convinced you're that interested in individual stories or in factual information. If you were, these bills never would have made it to committee in the first place. I think what you're interested in is keeping power so you can focus on things you think are more important, like taxes.

So instead, I will give the GOP members of this committee a word of warning: if you advance this bill out of committee, and especially if you pass it, *no one will forget it.* I've heard this same story repeated over and over, with different political subjects, all my life: when a group of people pander to the lowest common denominator in order to win votes, they never wash the stink of hate off. When the Florida legislature refused to protect Black civil rights in the 1950s, my middle-class White grandparents became protestors overnight, and they never forgave or forgot the elected officials who allowed racist hatred to continue unchecked. I watched in real time as gay rights in the US moved from fringe cause in the 1980s

to controversy in the 1990s to general natural consensus in the 2010s. The GOP lost that fight; they will lose this one, too, and it will tank your entire agenda.

If you pass this bill, the Wisconsin GOP won't win another election after my children's generation turns eighteen. Those children will become voting adults who will not forgive or forget. They won't say, "Oh, it was a different time." You won't get the benefit of the doubt. You will be branded as bigoted crazies who can't be trusted to govern without running roughshod over the rights of parents and the lives of children.

You know these bills are wrong. For the GOP members of this committee, perhaps you think that these bills are a great way to give the fringe lunatics a political win without angering the general population. This is a dramatically false premise. Ordinary people are watching, and none of us will forget it if you vote to sacrifice our kids in order to hold on to power.

Yours most sincerely,

Philosophy Walker

5218 Tolman Terrace

Madison, WI 53711

United Church of Christ
Open and Affirming
Immigrant Welcoming

54 South Jackson Street
Janesville, Wisconsin 53548-3837
(608) 752-8716
Website:
Facebook: Janesville UCC
Email: Janesvilleucc@janesvilleucc.org

October 11, 2023

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony.

My name is Rev. Dr. Tanya Sadagopan and I am from Janesville, WI. I am an ordained Minister in the United Church of Christ in the Wisconsin Conference. I am also the future mother-in-law of a gender nonbinary person who is engaged to my son.

Today I am speaking on behalf of my church Janesville UCC, First Congregational Church in who has sent me here to speak against the passage of this bill SB 480. I also served on the national UCC committee at our General Synod 34 in July that brought forth the resolution calling on clergy and lay leaders to Actively Affirm Transgender persons.

The first thing I would like to say is this: Stop harming children with legislation like this.

This bill is creating refugees. Let me explain. A colleague of mine who is a most caring and loving dad saw this day coming in Wisconsin. Because his child was experiencing gender dysphoria, he worked to move his family to Canada. He did not feel safe raising his young family in our state. Across the border he could assure his child could receive puberty blockers without fear of the legislature taking away his right to care for his family.

We have a school Principal in our church who sees the challenges trans youth face on a daily basis. They have this to say to the committee:

“For a youth population already struggling with mental health, the proposed legislation only intensifies the problems the young people face.”

From a faithful attender at our church who is undergoing gender affirming surgery this week, they asked that I share this testimony with the committee:

“I was 25 when I was 100% sure that I was, in fact Trans. It's not a choice that is made quickly or taken lightly. Years of counseling and guided information from people with similar experiences helped me. If I had been allowed access to this information at a younger age, I would have had a head start and been able to choose [to have gender affirming surgery] at 18.”

What does the national United Church of Christ say about this matter?¹ The following excerpted

¹ Resolution Committee 13: Actively Affirming the Human Dignity of Transgender and Nonbinary Persons, General Synod of the United Church of Christ, June 30-July 4, 2023, Indianapolis, Indiana.

resolution was passed this summer with an overwhelming majority of our delegates present. The message is clear, support trans persons and their families as children of God, and organize against legislation such as this that is making refugees of families seeking medical care.

“The United Church of Christ reaffirms the historic commitment of this church to recognize and affirm that every human being is created in the image of God and is due respect for their inherent human dignity and rights so that they may not only survive but thrive; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ reaffirms and proclaims people of transgender, nonbinary, and gender diverse experiences are beloved by God, with unique gifts and graces from the Divine for the life of the church and society, and are among the neighbors Jesus commands us to love and treat with worth and dignity; and the United Church of Christ encourages all settings of the church to organize to provide aid, comfort, and sanctuary to all who have been made refugees by hostile legislation.”

This testimony comes from a trans singer/songwriter who is performing in Wisconsin this month:

“Jesus is pretty unwavering in his call to welcome the stranger and provide refuge for the displaced among us. Bills like these create refugees. Parents and caregivers of minors experiencing gender dysphoria will find ways to care for their children. They will find ways to do what they know is best for their kids. They will seek refuge in a place where it is not outlawed for medical professionals to save their children’s lives. If that refuge is not Wisconsin, these parents and caregivers will go elsewhere.”

And finally, a trans young person asked me to ask you hear as you deliberate your decision”

“Have you met with Trans families and youth and heard what is best for their mental and physical wellbeing?”

I am here to speak love, life, and truth to powers in our government who are choosing to turn a blind eye and deafen their ears to the violence these bills wield in the name of convenient Christianity. Ours is a Christian faith that requires courage to speak love and stand up for justice. That is who we are in the United Church of Christ, we are the #loveandjusticechurch.

I urge you to vote against SB 480 and trust the families, doctors, mental health professionals to make these very difficult decisions on their own. I am representing clergy and leaders in our communities who are doing our best to validate our young people and to trust their spiritual journeys of discovery.

Respectfully,

Rev. Dr. Tanya Sadagopan

Minister, First Congregational UCC, 54 S. Jackson Street, Janesville, Wisconsin 53548

Kai DeRubis

To the Senate Committee on Health

Regarding Senate Bill 479, and Senate Bill 480

10/11/2023

I am in **opposition** to these bills.

Hello, my name is Kai DeRubis. I am a transgender man living in Wisconsin and I'm nearly 20 years old. I am testifying **against** Senate Bills 479 and 480.

Several years ago, I was diagnosed with gender dysphoria by both my primary care physician and my therapist. This means that my identity does not align with my assigned gender at birth, so certain parts of my experience with gender are deeply upsetting and cause emotional turmoil. When I was 16 years old, I had the incredible opportunity to start my medical transition. I'm truly grateful that I was able to start the process as a teen rather than deal with this pain until adulthood.

In 2020, I completed the process of preparing for top surgery, also known as a double mastectomy or chest masculinization surgery. I had to meet with a therapist for 8 months to get a letter stating that this was medically necessary. I also had to get signed permission from my parents and go through a lengthy consultation process with my surgeon. The surgery was performed at the Children's Hospital, only lasted about two hours, and I was able to go home that day. The healing process went smoothly and there were no complications. Three years later, I have full sensation in my chest, everything about it feels natural to me, and I've never looked back.

Getting top surgery at 16 has allowed me to walk confidently into my adulthood and begin to feel at home in my skin. I've pursued opportunities I never would have taken had I not gotten this surgery. Now that my body and brain are congruent, I feel connected to my sense of self and aligned with my identity. I am now exploring who I am instead of dwelling on my dysphoria. Gender-affirming surgery is NOT mutilation. My body is fully functional and healthy, and the decision was made in conjunction with my parents and medical professionals. It is truly heart-wrenching that this opportunity is being ripped from the hands of other transgender people. The government should have

no say in our bodily autonomy. This was the right decision for me, and I have absolutely no regrets.

Gender-affirming care saves lives, improves quality of life, and does absolutely no harm. Studies consistently find that the regret rate for gender-affirming care is less than 1%. For example, the article titled *New Study Confirms Extremely Low Regret Rates for Gender-Affirming Surgery* by Max Webberly states that, "The 0.3% regret rate of our newest study is much smaller compared to other, common yet serious surgeries. Interestingly, knee replacement surgery has a dissatisfactory rate of 6-30%. The rate is up to 100 times that of gender-affirming surgery." Every single decision a person can make comes with risks. We all have the right to make our own decisions, so why is this being treated differently from other big decisions?

As transgender individuals, we deserve the same freedoms as everyone else. Our medical transitions do not affect other people, and they should only be of concern to us and our doctors. Let medical professionals use their training and judgment to help people make the right decisions. Whether or not to pursue gender-affirming care is a private decision to be made by the person experiencing dysphoria, not a decision to be made by the government. Everyone should be allowed to take steps that resonate with their values and help them feel comfortable in their bodies.

Thank you for reading my testimony. I hope you will take this into consideration when voting on these bills.

Kai DeRubis

He/him

kndmusic1@gmail.com

Transgender activist

Aevi van der Stok

Regarding Senate Bill 480

10/11/2023

My name is Aevi van der Stok and I am a trans-nonbinary research assistant in chemistry at UW Madison and while I am currently a Wisconsin resident, I previously lived in Texas up until a few years ago. While it was not the only reason, increasing hostility towards the transgender community and the passage of laws targeting us was a contributing factor to my decision to leave Texas. I am testifying against Senate Bill 480, which seeks to prevent transgender youth from accessing gender-affirming care.

As a member of the trans community and former Texas resident I have seen firsthand the impact of bills that restrict transgender youth's ability to access life-saving gender affirming care. They do not actually serve to protect minors, nor do they reflect current scientific and medical knowledge regarding transgender youth and gender-affirming healthcare. Gender-affirming care for minors is always only done with the consent and approval of the youth's parents and medical providers, and usually consists primarily of puberty blockers which are safe and reversible and have already been used extensively to treat precocious puberty in cisgender children. Other methods of gender-affirming treatment such as hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and top surgery (ex: mastectomy) are generally only considered for older transgender youth (16-17 year olds) who have known they are transgender for multiple years already, and bottom surgery (gender-affirming surgery of the genitals) is not performed on minors. Claims of children being forced into irreversible gender-affirming treatment are completely unfounded and serve only to spread irrational fear and stigma around the trans community. The only situation in which this scenario occurs is the treatment of intersex youth via surgery and hormones – treatment that is often medically unnecessary and serves only to make their bodies conform to binary sex standards. And this scenario is explicitly allowed by SB 480. Why should the law consider it unacceptable for a young person who wants gender affirming care and has the support of their guardians and healthcare providers to get treatment to pause puberty and allow them more time to decide, yet consider it acceptable for an intersex child to be operated upon or treated with hormones even if it is medically unnecessary and potentially undesired? This bill does not protect youth from irreversible medical treatment, it serves only to police and enforce a rigid sex binary and restrict gender variance. Scientific and medical knowledge supports the safety, reversibility, and immense benefit of gender affirming care for transgender youth and current policy and guidelines surrounding gender-affirming care for minors already reflect scientific and medical advice and take a conservative approach to allow trans youth as much time as possible to make transition related decisions. There is no reason to further restrict their access to lifesaving care.

I felt the need to testify on this subject as I do not wish to see Wisconsin repeat the same harmful mistakes as the state where I used to reside, and I fear Wisconsin becoming as hostile to me and my community. Similar legislation in my home state and other states has served only to increase stigma against an already vulnerable marginalized community by targeting the most vulnerable – transgender youth. As minors, transgender youth do not have the ability to give testimony or defend themselves against bills targeting their existence. Therefore, I feel it is my responsibility as a transgender adult who has witnessed the fear such policies inflict upon them to speak up in their defense on their

behalf. Additionally, once such policies have been instituted, things don't generally end at restricting minors' access to gender-affirming care but are later expanded to restrict gender-affirming care for transgender individuals of all ages. This is completely unacceptable and the government should not be attempting to intervene in the decisions made by a consenting and properly informed adult's and their doctors. Bodily autonomy must be protected for transgender individuals of all ages. If passes, this bill poses a significant threat to the well-being and rights of transgender Wisconsinites as a whole. It seeks to solve a problem that does not exist, and in doing so would create new problems and open the door for future anti-trans and discriminatory legislation.

If the goal is truly to prevent irreversible changes and ensure transgender youth take time to think about their gender identity and consider their options, then the current recommendations made by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) and supported by scientific and medical literature *are* already the solution. Puberty blockers pause or prevent the irreversible changes brought upon by puberty, and allow transgender youth more time to explore and question their gender identity before making decisions with permanent outcomes. Gender-affirming healthcare is lifesaving healthcare, and transgender youth deserve access to the treatments they need. Denying them this goes against all current medical and scientific opinion.

Thank you for taking my testimony under consideration.

My name is Rev. Dr. Jason Mack.

- I am the pastor of Underwood Memorial Baptist Church in Wauwatosa, WI
- and a resident of Madison.

- I am writing to you today to urge you, with all of my heart, to oppose Senate Bills Bill 479 & 480.

- I write to you today because I serve a God that loves.
 - A God that, according to our scriptures, literally *is* love (1 John 4:8).

- I write to you today because I serve a God who I believe sent Their own son – a very piece of themselves – to come to earth to show us how to love.
 - To show us that to live a life of love is to love the outcast, the left behind, and the marginalized.
 - I follow this son, this teacher, this guru, this lord.
 - I follow this example of God's love on earth every day to the best of my ability.
 - And I encourage my church to do the same.

- This teacher of love, this piece of God, was murdered.
 - Not by criminals.
 - Not by a rival religion.
 - Not by the outcasts that he served.

- This teacher of love was killed by an unholy alliance between the religious and political leaders of his day.
 - This teacher of love was killed because he dared to love the wrong people and told others to do the same.

- So, I write to you today to say, as loud as I possibly can,
 - that the hate and the scapegoating of the trans community that is present in this bill,
 - has nothing, absolutely nothing,
 - to do with Jesus or the God that sent him.
 - And I, for one, will speak out against it as long as I have breath in my lungs.

- Because I don't just write to you today as a pastor. I write to you as a parent.
 - A parent of a trans youth who every day must watch as their country, the leaders who are supposed to be there to protect them, threaten their very existence.
 - They're just a kid.
 - Just trying to love their life and love their friends and get into college.
 - They shouldn't have to worry if their very existence is going to be outlawed.

- To the representatives supporting this legislation,
 - I ask, and I pray, that you would look deeply into your own heart and ask yourself,
 - Is there something scary to you about my kid?
 - Are you afraid of people simply being who they are?
 - Do you feel you need to silence difference?
 - Are you so insecure that you want to push others back into a closet of your making?

- And I ask *you* to pray.
 - Because I am confident that the God of love will let you know that what you are doing has *nothing* to do with them.
 - And that God will tell you simply to stop, just, stop.

- Thank you for your time.

Rev. Dr. Jason Mack
Pastor, Underwood Memorial Baptist Church
Madison, WI 53705

To the Senate Committee on Health.

My name is Robyn Doege-Brennan and I live in Janesville, Wisconsin. I am grateful to be appointed to the Naturopathic Medical Examining Board. I have several reasons why I feel strongly that it is important to provide licensure for qualified naturopathic doctors and to ensure the safety of those seeking alternative medical treatments.,

My background – I graduated from Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington, IL with a degree in Voice Performance and a minor in Piano performance. Rather than pursue this career, I pursued my now husband and am the proud parent of 2 young men who are currently studying at the University of Health Sciences in Lombard, IL to become Naturopathic doctors.

We as a family were first introduced to Naturopathic medicine through an informational meeting held at the elementary school our boys attended. I'd never heard of naturopathic medicine before but was intrigued by the idea of gaining a better understanding of how we could help ourselves be healthier through more natural methods.

Our entire family began seeing the naturopathic doctor with great results. I won't go into our medical history, but I think it's impressive to say our sons have taken antibiotics maybe 5 times (if that) throughout their lives (they're now 26 and 23). I don't think we'll have to worry about antibiotic resistance!

I'm grateful to say the Naturopathic doctor I work with is very knowledgeable and takes time to explain how and why my body reacts the way it does, offers safe alternative treatments that make sense, and, I believe, truly cares about me as a person. I find it fascinating that we can get effective results from more natural remedies that I feel are safer and definitely less expensive than prescription medications.

In addition, we were quite lucky in the fact that our general practitioner was very much in favor of working in collaboration with our Naturopathic doctor. He reviewed labs ordered by our ND and listened to what her insights were. He even shared with me that during his residency he had rounds with a naturopathic doctor. He has since retired, and I am currently hoping to find a like-minded general practitioner.

I'd like to share one of my most memorable experiences I had with my Naturopathic doctor. So, imagine this. You're right-handed, you teach voice and piano, and you wake up one morning and two of the fingers on your right hand are stuck. My thoughts exactly! Because of overusing my arm, I developed both a golfer and tennis elbow. These, in turn, caused what is commonly known as trigger finger. In speaking with friends who are medical doctors, I was advised I could brace the elbow, if that didn't work, I could get injections, and if that didn't work, we'd move on to surgery. Needless to say, I made an appointment with my naturopathic doctor. She also recommended the elbow brace but used acupuncture to reduce the inflammation, recommended Epsom salt baths and suggested some natural anti-inflammatories. Granted, it took a while, but

without injections or surgery, I no longer have the trigger fingers and feel confident in my playing and teaching abilities again!

You can see why I'm passionate about being on this board. I have two sons pursuing this as a career, and my hope is the experiences I've had with naturopathic medicine can be safely experienced (through licensure) by others.

Thank you for your time and consideration and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

ROBYN R. DOEGE-BRENNAN

1904 Doubletree Dr. | Janesville, WI 53546 | (608) 728-7277
brennansmusicstudio@gmail.com | brennansmusicstudio.com

OBJECTIVE

To represent patient priorities and interests on the Naturopathic Medical Examining Board.

SKILLS & ABILITIES

- Ability to actively listen, assess, and recommend solutions.
- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Ability to work collaboratively with other professionals
- Ability to motivate people
- Good time management and attention to detail
- High degree of professionalism
- Self-Motivated and disciplined
- Intermediate Microsoft Word and Excel user

Employment History

BRENNAN'S MUSIC STUDIO, LLC
APRIL 2003 – CURRENT

- Sole proprietor of a music studio providing one-on-one instruction to over 100 students in piano and voice
- Utilize various platforms to provide on-line practice opportunities and student-driven organization

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS, ROCK PRAIRIE MONTESSORI
SCHOOL JUNE 2003 – MAY 2019

- Provide direct oversight for Buildings and Grounds, Payroll, Human Resources and Finance

BOARD EXPERIENCE

- July 2002-June 2003 – Secretary – Rock Prairie Montessori School Board
- July 2003-June 2004 - Vice President – Rock Prairie Montessori School Board
- July 1, 2023 – July 1, 2027 – appointed to the Naturopathic Medical Examining Board with the position title of Website Liaison.

EDUCATION

Illinois Wesleyan University – Bloomington, IL

- Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance with a minor in Piano Performance

CERTIFICATIONS

Speech Level Singing / Institute for Vocal Advancement

- Level 3.5 certified Vocal Instructor

Kindermusik

MEMBERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS

- National Association of Teachers of Singing, Inc.
- Music Teachers National Association
- Master Level Adjudicator for WSMA Solo & Ensemble for both Voice and Piano
- National and Regional Judge for NFMC (National Federation of Music Clubs)
- Local Chair and State Co-Chair for Wisconsin Federation of Music Club Festivals

Peter J. Sheild, D.D.S.

Appointment Hearing—Dentistry Examining Board

October 12, 2023

Good Morning Senators Cabral-Guevara, Testin, Felzkowski, Jacque, Hesselbein, and Carpenter. I appreciate the work you do for the citizens of Wisconsin.

By way of background, I'm a proud graduate of the University of Wisconsin and Marquette University School of Dentistry. After I retired from private practice at the end of 2016, I felt an obligation to give back to our wonderful profession. Currently, I serve on the Dental Examining Board and desire to serve another four years as a Dentist member. Needless to say, my first 4 years were challenging as we navigated the uncharted waters of the pandemic. Those challenges also yielded opportunities for members of the Board to be good listeners, to be resourceful, and to be grateful for the teamwork of organized dentistry and state government.

For over three decades I've been fortunate to have experienced dentistry from many different angles—Associate, owner of a group practice, and owner of a large solo practice (with and without having an associate). I've been a mentor to undergrads wanting to get into dentistry and dental students interested in real world dentistry. I've served in an advisory capacity in setting up a dental clinic at the Lake Area Free Clinic in Oconomowoc. I've talked to school age kids, third-graders primarily, as part of February being dental health month. Along the way, I piled up hundreds of Continuing Education hours so I could provide the best care possible to my patients. Each of those experiences allowed me to draw knowledge that I have been able to apply as a committed member of the DEB.

I continue to have a strong interest in ensuring the public's safety related to the delivery of dental care. I believe my work will continue to be significant and impactful as I maintain my positions as Chair of the Screening Panel, The Monitoring Liaison, and the Professional Assistance Procedure (PAP) Liaison for the Dental Examining Board. Although these positions are time consuming, I believe they are vitally important in maintaining the integrity of the profession and the trust of the public.

As we continue to work together, many issues challenge the profession of dentistry in Wisconsin. Among them are opioid prescribing, access to dental care, increased reimbursement for Badger Care services to dentists, and accountability of non-dentist owners of dental practices.

I look forward to receiving your support of my nomination. Thank you for your time and attention.

Peter J. Sheild, D.D.S.

15 White Tail Lane
Oconomowoc, WI 53066
(262) 305-1323
pjsdds@wi.rr.com

Experience

- Sheild Family Dentistry** | Oconomowoc, Wisconsin
▪ Owned private dental practice *October 1995 - December 2016*
- Leaman, Sheild, and Setnicar** | Oconomowoc, Wisconsin
▪ Owned private dental practice *September 1987 – October 1995*
- Associate Dentist**—Madison, Wisconsin *July 1985 – September 1987*

Education

- Marquette University School of Dentistry** | Milwaukee, WI
Doctor of Dental Surgery *May 1985*
- University of Wisconsin-Madison** | Madison, Wisconsin
Bachelor of Arts *May 1981*
Major: Zoology Minor: Chemistry

Collegiate Extracurricular

- University of Wisconsin Junior Varsity Basketball** | Madison, Wisconsin
▪ Player *August 1977 – March 1980*
Engaged in position requiring commitment, time management and focus under pressure

Community Service

- State of Wisconsin Dental Examining Board** | Madison, Wisconsin *2018-Current*
▪ Board Member
- Camp Mishike Shores Property Owners Association** | Presque Isle, Wisconsin *2020-Current*
▪ President
- Ponds at Pabst Farms Homeowners Association** | Oconomowoc, Wisconsin *2018-Current*
▪ Treasurer
- Glacier Community YMCA Endowment Board** | Oconomowoc, Wisconsin *2019-2021*
▪ Chairman
- St. Paul's Lord's Cupboard Food Pantry** | Oconomowoc, Wisconsin *2022-Current*
▪ Distributed food to families while spreading the Gospel
- Teresa's Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer** | Oconomowoc, Wisconsin *2008-2017*
▪ President and Founder
- YMCA at Pabst Farms** | Oconomowoc, Wisconsin *2002-2004*
▪ Served as President
- Lake Country Free Clinic** | Waukesha, Wisconsin *2016-2020*
▪ Served on the Dental Advisory Board

Honors

Community

- YMCA Key Leader
- Oconomowoc Volunteer of the Year Award
- First State Certified Dementia Friendly Dental Office in Waukesha County
- Champion of the County in Waukesha County



DUEY STROEBEL

STATE SENATOR • 20TH DISTRICT

Testimony on SB 480

October 12, 2023

Thank you Chair Cabral-Guevara and committee members for holding a public hearing on Senate Bill 480, a bill I authored with Representative Allen for the purpose of prohibiting gender transition medical interventions for children in Wisconsin, with certain limited exceptions. The bill prescribes a penalty of license revocation for health care professionals who violate the prohibition.

It has been well-established that the prefrontal cortex is far from fully-developed prior to adulthood.¹ Based on their stage of brain development, children are more likely to act impulsively and are less likely to fully comprehend or consider the consequences of their decisions.² I believe most parents understand this reality, which serves as the underpinning for the variety of policies that have been put in place in Wisconsin and throughout the country that prohibit children from joining the military, getting a tattoo, signing a contract or purchasing alcohol and tobacco products, to provide a few examples. This bill protects our most vulnerable population by preventing medically-unnecessary, permanent body-altering and sterilizing procedures from being performed on individuals under the age of 18.

While you will hear a variety of overconfident proclamations from the detractors of this legislation regarding the existence of a scientific consensus among medical professionals in support of the “gender-affirming care” model for children, the science is far from “settled.”³ The fact of the matter is that the U.S. medical establishment is quickly becoming an outlier in the realm of pediatric gender medicine. Medical authorities in Denmark, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom have recently carried out some combination of placing sharp restrictions on the use of cross-sex hormones, banning surgical procedures, closing down gender clinics and issuing clear warnings regarding the experimental nature of these medical interventions for children experiencing gender dysphoria.⁴⁻⁸ It bears mentioning that each of these countries have based their decisions on systematic literature reviews (evidence-based medicine) and now place greater emphasis on ethical, agenda-free psychotherapy as a first-line treatment for gender-dysphoric youth.

There are no robust long-term studies on the effects of puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones and gender transition surgeries on children. Nevertheless, research suggests that the overwhelming majority of children presenting with gender dysphoria will reconcile their gender identity with their biological sex during puberty.⁹ Studies from multiple countries on the gender-affirming model have found that the majority of children referred to pediatric gender clinics had been diagnosed with at least one mental health disorder prior to the onset of gender dysphoria.¹⁰⁻¹³ The oft-repeated “affirm-or-suicide” rhetoric conflates correlation with causation and presents parents with a false dichotomy. Research has shown comparable rates of suicidal behavior between gender-dysphoric and non-gender-distressed children with similar mental health disorders.¹⁴ It also bears mentioning that this narrative dangerously violates decades of research-based guidelines on how to responsibly talk about suicide, which is known to be a socially contagious behavior.¹⁵⁻¹⁷

Protecting children from invasive and irreversible medical interventions is the right thing to do from a scientific and ethical standpoint, and most Americans agree. When asked specifically about eligibility for hormone treatments and gender transition surgeries, a majority of Americans do not support access to these medical interventions for children.¹⁸ Even when poll questions are presented with abstractions or euphemisms as opposed to plain language, a clear plurality of Americans still voice support for such restrictions.¹⁹ Our children are not experiments and parents should not be pressured into subjecting their children to medical interventions that carry life-long consequences during the primary phase of their development. Thank you for your consideration of SB 480.

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October 12, 2023
Committee on Health: SB480
Speaking against
Rev. Ellen Rasmussen,
Ordained Elder of The United Methodist Church
Oshkosh

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I come before you as a parent and as an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church currently serving the beautiful people of Oshkosh.

One of the blessings of my faith tradition is to live a life moving towards Christian Perfection—to be made whole in God's love and grace. Our lives are journeys and adventures of growing into who we have been created to be as beloved and cherished children of the Sacred One. Our journeys are complex and challenging. There is no straight line. It takes all of us loving and living together to create a community where all may be whole.

When my children were in high school and into their young adult years, we forged our way through severe depression. One evening, my child lay their head in my lap, crying, and shared how much they hurt—even the hair on their head, how they didn't fit in, that things weren't right, and they were so very, very tired of fighting. They knew they were loved and said so but weren't sure if they could go on. As tears streamed down my face, I knew that I would do whatever it took to help my child heal and journey into wholeness.

It took a team of dedicated people to help our family. Our greatest support came from my child's primary doctor, chiropractor, and mental health provider. We were persistent in working together to

find the best solutions for my child. It was a comprehensive care program that developed over time.

I can only imagine what a family engages in when a child with gender dysphoria seeks a path to wholeness. We do not know what each person will need to live into the person they are called to be. Children and their families need the support and network of healthcare professionals to make the best-informed decisions. Do not take away resources that can help a child not just live, but thrive.

I encourage you to vote against SB480 and, in turn, focus your energy and resources on building communities that nurture and support all children on their adventure of self-discovery and wholeness. Invest in schools built to encourage curiosity, acceptance, and wholeness. Help create cultures of kindness, compassion, and conflict resolution. Help create Beloved Community.

NASW WI TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO 2023 SENATE BILL 480

Senator Cabral-Guevara and members of the Senate Committee on Health.

My name is Marc Herstand. I have served as the Executive Director of the National Association of Social Workers, Wisconsin Chapter for the past 31 years.

I am speaking in opposition to Senate Bill 480, which would deny gender affirming care to transgender youth.

During the 2019-2020 legislative session, Speaker Robin Vos established a Task Force on Suicide Prevention, which held statewide hearings and developed legislation to help address the high suicide rate in Wisconsin. During the 2013-2014 legislative session, Speaker Vos established a Task Force on Mental Health. This Task Force also held statewide hearings and developed legislation to help address unmet mental health needs in Wisconsin.

The Covid-19 pandemic has greatly exacerbated already high levels of suicidality, mental health and substance abuse in our state that were examined in these early Task Forces. Our current Legislature and Governor have begun taking steps to address these very challenging conditions.

Unfortunately the impact of 2023 Senate Bill 480 would undermine these important efforts and increase suicidality, depression, anxiety and other mental health challenges among transgender youth in our state.

Transgender young people face greatly increased rates of suicidality, depression and bullying compared to other children. The Wisconsin Medical Society has identified transgender individuals as being among the highest risk for suicide in the state¹. An analysis of data from the 2017 and 2019 Youth Risk Behavior State and Local Survey showed that almost 44% of transgender youth, versus 16 percent of cisgender youth, reported considering suicide in the previous year. Almost 30% of transgender youth had made at least one suicide attempt compared with only 7.3% of cisgender youth. 59.4% of transgender youth compared to 33.5% of cisgender youth reported feeling sad or hopeless in the previous 12 months. 50% of transgender youth reported feeling bullied at school or electronically compared to 23% of cisgender youth. 34.6% of transgender youth reported that they skipped school due to safety concerns in the past 12 months compared to 9.3% of cisgender children and 28% of transgender youth compared to 7% of cisgender youth were threatened or injured with weapons on school property in the past 12 months². These bills will further stigmatize these children and contribute to the already high levels of mental health distress and suicidality faced by transgender children.

There is a wealth of research demonstrating the positive mental health impacts of gender affirming care on transgender youth. Here are some of the studies: In a 2022 study the American Medical Association found that Youth (13-20) who received gender-affirming medications (puberty blockers, hormones) had: 1) 60% lower odds of moderate/severe depressions; 2) 73% lower odds of suicidality over first 12 months, compared to those who did not get medication and 3) Those who didn't start medication had two-fold to threefold higher depressive symptoms and suicidality than baseline levels³.

A June 2020 article in the Journal of Adolescent Health showed that transgender adolescents receiving puberty suppression had fewer emotional and behavioral problems than those who were only referred to transgender care⁴.

A 2019 article in the American Psychological Association: Society of Pediatric Psychology stated that participants' suicidality scores significantly decreased following administration of hormones. In addition on average, patients endorsed at least one item of suicidality; at final assessment after treatment, participants endorsed almost no symptoms of suicidality and increased their general well-being scores⁵.

A 2022 Stanford University School of Medicine article reported on a 2015 survey of more than 27,000 US transgender adults. It showed that transgender people who began hormone treatment in adolescence had fewer thoughts of suicide, were less likely to experience major mental health disorders, and had fewer problems with substance abuse than those who started hormones in adulthood. It also showed better mental health among those who received hormones at any age than those who desired but never received treatment. The odds of severe psychological distress reduced by 222% (early adolescence), 153% (late adolescence), and 81% (adulthood) for those who began hormones during these life stages. Finally the odds of suicidal ideation were 135% lower (early adolescence), 62% lower (late adolescence), and 21% lower (adults)⁶.

On another issue, decisions on gender affirming care are made jointly with the adolescent, their parent(s) and the doctor. The State of Wisconsin should not be interfering with the work of our medical professionals nor of the rights of parents and their children to make decisions on medical care.

Finally I want to mention that by outlawing referral to gender affirming care, this bill criminalizes social work practice. Through our Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, social workers are ethically obligated to refer clients to services and other professionals that would benefit the client. As I have stated above there is overwhelming research demonstrating the positive and lifesaving benefits of gender affirming care, which is standard of practice for the medical profession. Outlawing referral to gender affirming care is an unacceptable intrusion into professional social work practice.

I would be happy to answer any questions.

Marc Herstand, MSW CISW
Executive Director
National Association of Social Workers, Wisconsin Chapter

1. "Bill ignores experts on gender-affirming care for youth" by Natalie Eilbert, Milwaukee Journal/Sentinel, October 10, 2023
2. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbtq-rights/reports/2021/02/08/495502/fair-play/>
3. <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/population-care/understanding-short-term-impact-gender-affirming-care#:~:text=The%20results%20showed%20that%20youth,did%20not%20get%20such%20medications>
4. [https://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X\(20\)30027-6/fulltext](https://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X(20)30027-6/fulltext)
5. https://psycnet.apa.org/fulltext/2019-52280-009.pdf?auth_token=d9e26757f5c6a161f76efae20eac85288c1ef1e
6. <https://med.stanford.edu/news/all-news/2022/01/mental-health-hormone-treatment-transgender-people.html>



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October 12, 2023

Chair Cabral-Guevara, Vice-Chair Testin, and Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Health:

My name is Dr. Sheri Swokowski, and I am a Board Member of the American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin. The ACLU of Wisconsin is a non-partisan, non-profit organization working to protect civil liberties—including freedom of speech and the right to equal protection under the law.

I'm writing in opposition to Senate Bill 480, which would ban access to life-saving gender-affirming care for young people, a topic that I am intimately familiar with. My Ph.D. dissertation research involved identifying the barriers to care transgender service members encounter, and for full transparency, I am a retired Army infantry Colonel with 35 years of service and the highest ranking, out, transgender veteran in the United States.

It's important to recognize that transgender people make up a tiny fraction of the population, and many know they are trans at an early age—I often compare it to someone knowing they're left-handed. Each person's journey is different; gender-affirming care for some may mean providing social and emotional support, using a young person's correct name and pronouns, and supporting them presenting in a way that is consistent with their gender identity. Some transgender youth need medical care to be able to live and thrive as their authentic selves.

Ultimately, gender-affirming care saves lives. Puberty blockers and hormone therapy have been used to treat gender dysphoria for decades, and are firmly grounded in science and the standards of care. Every major expert medical association recognizes that gender-affirming care for transgender youth may be medically appropriate and necessary to improve the physical and mental health of transgender people, including the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the Endocrine Society, the American Urological Association, the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, the American College of Physicians, the American Association of Clinical Endocrinology, the American Psychiatric Association, and the American Psychological Association.

It's also important to note that trans people seldom “change their minds.” For youth, between 96 and 98% go on to continue transitioning as adults. Studies have shown that access to puberty blockers during adolescence is associated with lower odds of transgender adults considering self-harm; this medication is also reversible – if the medication is stopped, puberty will progress.

I've testified before committees in this legislature on several occasions, including testifying in opposition to a bathroom bill sponsored by Rep. Jesse Kremer during the 2015-16 legislative session. I recall comments from committee members that made clear they did not understand even the basics about gender dysphoria and the lived experiences of transgender people. Unfortunately, introduction of bills like SB-480 proves that not much has changed in eight years.

It is wholly inappropriate for legislators, motivated by political ideology, to intervene in the health care of a child. Transgender young people, their parents, and their doctors are in the best position to decide the appropriate course of medical treatment for each minor patient.

I urge committee members to vote against this harmful legislation.

Jacob Wollinger, Et Al
Regarding Senate Bill 480
10/11/23

To The Wisconsin Senate Committee On Health,

Hello, my name is Jacob Wollinger and I'm a Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist. My co-signing colleagues and I are testifying today in opposition to SB 480, the so-called "medical care ban".

As professionals and as people, we are ardent supporters of the LGBTQ+ community; we understand that their oppression exists in ways that are social; political; economic; and potentially, medical. We understand the nuances of gender identity exploration, and we understand that any "risks" inherent in medical gender-affirming care are vastly outweighed by the risks inherent in *not being allowed to transition*. The one-size-fits-all limitations prescribed by SB 480 are dangerous and, if enacted, will cost lives.

We understand that, well, not everyone understands. If we felt like giving the authors of SB 480 the benefit of the doubt, we'd say they have deep, deep misunderstandings about the ramifications of this proposed bill. How many trans youth have they ever met? Worked with? Yes, we understand that they misunderstand this gravely, at the peril of all gender-curious Wisconsin youth.

If we were feeling less gracious, we might identify the motives of these authors as hateful & ignorant. We might deem the authors of SB 480 and any other bad-faith actors to be enemies of the people of Wisconsin. In fact, what ulterior motives might exist for those in power to write this legislation? Might the powerful have less to worry about when the working class is fighting with itself?

We understand that aspects of this issue are complex & nuanced. We understand that not everyone has the same level of familiarity with these

issues. And based on those understandings, if nothing else, we condemn SB 480 and any “one-size-fits-all” trans youth legislation that does not take into account the needs, dignities, civil & human rights of individuals and their communities.

Thank you very much for your time & energy. Please consider this testimony on its own & as part of the broad majority of healthcare professionals who understand that legislation like SB 480 will be wholly detrimental to our patients, clients, family, & friends. Please do the right thing and strike down this bill.

Jacob Wollinger, LMFT

Megan Horvath, MSW Student

Laura Wilkinson, LCSW

Janyl Kozelka, LMFT

Brooke Allen, LPC

Rebecca Nash, LMFT

Cathy Martin, LCSW

Emilie Klos, LMFT

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Jo Anna Pautsch, and I am a resident of Cottage Grove in the Town of Sun Prairie. I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480.

I've lived in Wisconsin my entire 54 years and 11 months. I have given birth to and raised two pretty awesome children. One was comfortable and happy with their gender assigned at birth, the other was not. Both are happy, healthy, kind, thriving, educated, law-abiding, voting, tax paying, successful adults because we were and are good parents - parents who loved unconditionally, listened, and observed, and truly heard and saw them both for who they were and who they wanted to be. And we nurtured that. We asked questions, educated ourselves, and grew alongside them. We modeled respect and received respect in return. We got them both the health care they needed. When one broke their arm jumping off a swing at school, we got them medical care. When one had trouble breathing due to asthma, we got them medical care. When one identified differently due to gender dysphoria, we got them medical care. We took great care of our kids using every sense, every emotion, every experience, every lesson learned, and every resource we were privileged to have access to in this state we 4 still call home. We were trusted as parents with these two precious children and we took the responsibility very seriously. No banning of books or targeted health care needed

In a nation that espouses "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" and "freedom and justice for all," the "FOR ALL" part is not ambiguous. We cannot deny certain groups of people the appropriate, targeted health care that we all deserve. We cannot deny health care that could provide a happier, healthier, better quality of life for people.

I ask you sincerely, "Don't we have enough pain, anger, sadness, depression, and suicide in the world?" I've had a brother, a boyfriend, and a nephew each take their own lives because they saw no other choice. Our transgender youth have a choice and should continue to have that choice in order for them to be who they know themselves to be with the guidance and support of their family and doctors. Because, let's be honest, it isn't the health and well-being part that is a problem with supporters of these bills... it's the distaste for the non-binary community and wanting to control how parents raise their children as

future voters, workers, and leaders in society. Its about keeping non-binary folks, especially transgender, "in the closet" for the comfort of those fighting to maintain their heteronormative supremacy instead of embracing diversity and equality. If it were truly about our children's well-being, there would be more laws paving the way for parents and their children - of all communities and belief systems - to equitably thrive. Do you have any idea how many homeless youth we have in Madison alone? How many families the food pantries serve on a regular basis?

If we truly believe in "parent's rights" & that "parents know what's best for their kids", we need to trust parents to make the best decisions possible regarding their child's physical, mental, and emotional well-being, with the best resources made available to families.

So while my children are no longer minors, I am still going to show up in support of their and all people's rights to informed, safe, and scientifically sound medical care - to include gender affirming care. No one should be denied any health care that they have chosen for their own body, with guidance and support from their family, and their doctor. No legislative body, regardless of party, religious belief, or personal preference, should be able to pass a law designed to discriminate against certain groups of people, denying targeted care, and diminishing parental rights.

Nothing is going to cease the existence of a multitude of sexual preferences and gender identities from existing, being, or becoming who they know themselves to be or want to become. And your not agreeing with or believing in their identity doesn't negate or invalidate their existence or worth. You be your authentic selves and let them be their authentic selves. They're not hurting anyone. But you will be if you support these bills. If you truly care about the well-being of ALL children, you will vote NO on Senate bills 479 & 480.

Sincerely,

Jo Anna Pautsch

Cottage Grove (Town of Sun Prairie), 53527

To the Senate Committee on Health and the lawmakers who are attempting to pass this bill,

My name is Deanna Bennett, and I am currently a resident of Fitchburg, WI who has lived in the Madison area for most of my life. I am in my final year of graduate school for clinical mental health counseling and currently working as an intern in addition to my classes, and I am writing to you today to oppose the bills SB 479 and SB 480. There is clear, definitive, and well documented research that indicates that gender affirming care saves lives. I am not speaking in hyperbole when I say that lives are at stake here. Suicidal ideation and rates of suicide increase dramatically when people are forced to live as someone they are not. The trans and non-binary population is already inordinately at risk without denying them life-saving care. It is essential that our trans and non-binary youth be allowed to seek their own private medical care without the influence of the government. The decision to pursue gender affirming care is between the patient, their doctor, and if they are minors, their parents. I will say again that this is *lifesaving* care. There is absolutely no reason the government needs to be involved in private medical decisions. Allowing the government influence in these matters offers a slippery slope, and a disturbing precedent to *everyone's* bodily autonomy. As someone who works in mental health care and works directly with those seeking and those who have been provided gender affirming care, I can say that I have witnessed the monumental positive changes that have come directly from this kind of care. I have seen lack luster, depressed, and anxious people become vibrant and confident. I have seen the relief on people's faces when I tell them I can help them get what they need. I have heard stories of frustration and anger when they struggle to find care, and the stories of joy when they are able to look in the mirror and finally see the inside reflected on the outside. There are already so many barriers for trans and non-

binary people, please do not add to the struggles they already face. You do not have to understand trans and non-binary people in order to support patient privacy. I urge you not to fall prey to the fear mongering and distraction politics at play and see these bills for what they truly are: an attack on our medical privacy, and an attempt to regulate and control our bodies. Not just trans and non-binary, but everyone. This is what we mean when we say Trans Rights are Human Rights. I urge you to listen to the medical and mental health organizations and professionals who endorse these treatments, such as the American Medical Association, American Counseling Association, and American Psychological Association, and not to those who fear what they don't understand. I vehemently oppose bill SB 479 and SB 480 and demand that this committee dismiss these harmful, backwards attempts to oppress our rights. Thank you.

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Adele Lockwood, and I am a resident of the city of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 16 years and I have been fortunate enough to grow up with a loving, caring family who has supported the expression of my identity, along with accessing uncensored education. I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bills 479 and 480. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because both bills could cause irreparable harm to the trans youth of our communities.

To pass these bills would worsen the already existing prejudice against trans people and the general acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community. According to the 2015 Wisconsin reports of the **US Transgender Survey**, 77% of openly transgender kids or simply kids that were perceived as transgender in the grades between K-12, experience some form of persecution. Out of that seventy seven percent; 45% were verbally abused, 23% were physically attacked, 11% were sexually assaulted, and 18% left the school they had been attending because of the severity of harassment they faced. Passing these bills would also lead to more accounts of suicide and a decline in mental health. **The Trevor Project** provides a list of factors that could reduce the risk of suicide. Among many other things is *"Support from medical and mental health care professionals."* Also stated in **The Trevor Project's** website is the finding that, *"45% of LGBTQ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year, including more than half of transgender and nonbinary youth."* From these pieces of information it is obvious that the passing of Senate Bill 479 and/or Senate Bill 480 would have a detrimental effect on the queer people in Wisconsin. Passing Senate Bill 479 would open up opportunities to take down healthcare that is essential for the well being of people in our state. Along with this, the facts back up the argument that the passing of the two bills sends a message of transphobia that would worsen the societal treatment of LGBTQ+ people and subsequently increase the amount of suicidal ideation and suicide attempts. While voting NO on these bills will certainly not eradicate transphobia in Wisconsin, the act would continue to protect the trans people in our community. If nothing else, voting NO would mean two fewer bills that discriminate against people, specifically kids, that just want to live their own lives.

I've shared some of the statistics but I'd now like to share a little bit about my personal views. I am 16 years old and a Junior in high school.

I was assigned female at birth, I identify as genderqueer and I personally do not need gender affirming care. However, I am writing this testimony because I want to know that my trans friends, family, and peers will be able to live openly and content. I am writing this because, in general, I believe that it is an inherent human right to feel comfortable with oneself and within one's community. Transgender people are parents, children, cousins, friends, and classmates. More than that, transgender people can be *your* children, cousins, friends, and peers. Anyone can be trans and it is not a choice that is made, it is an identity that millions of people experience, for exactly that reason it is vital that we make Wisconsin a more welcoming place starting WITHOUT the passing of bills 479 and 480. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I don't believe politicians should interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Sincerely,

Adele Lockwood

Madison, 53719



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TO: Senator Cabral-Guevara, Chair, Senate Committee on Health

FROM: Martha Cranley, State Director, AARP Wisconsin

Subject: Testimony in Favor of Senate Bill 407- healthy aging grants and making an appropriation.

October 12th, 2023

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of Senate Bill 407, which requires the Department of Health Services (DHS) to provide a grant of \$378,000 in each year of the 2023-25 biennium to the Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging to implement and coordinate efforts to reduce older adult falls through the Falls Free Wisconsin initiative.

According to the CDC, Wisconsin has the highest rate of deadly falls among older adults in the country. There were over 1,700 fall-related deaths in Wisconsin in 2021 alone.

Unfortunately, there are many reasons to believe that this trend will continue if steps are not taken to address it. Data provided by DHS shows that Wisconsin medics responded to 131,000 falls in 2022 alone—a 24% increase from 2019. In fact, the number of EMS calls related to falls have increased by about 10,000 in each of the last four years.

The growing number of falls among older adults creates strain not only on our overburdened EMS providers but also on emergency rooms and hospitals. According to DHS, in 2021, there were 118,000 nonfatal emergency room visits related to falls and 13,000 nonfatal hospitalizations.

Every year, according to the CDC, falls among older people cost the nation more than \$20.2 billion in direct medical costs. By 2020, the total annual cost of these injuries is expected to reach \$32.4 billion. The good news is that we understand the root cause of falls among older adults and have the ability to reduce them with evidence-based strategies.

The vast majority of fall injuries (55%) occur within the home. Many of these falls, and the resulting injuries, can be prevented by taking steps to improve balance and coordination or eliminate potential hazards in and around the home, such as removing rugs; keeping pathways free of clutter; keeping the outside steps and walkways free of wet leaves, ice, snow, and other debris; and increasing lighting throughout the house.

By focusing on falls prevention, we can help our older adults age in place, reduce strain on unpaid caregivers, relieve the strain on EMS providers caused by our state's high rate of falls, and lower the utilization of expensive emergency room visits and hospitalizations from falls. The state will undoubtedly make an excellent return on the invest of \$378,000 this bill makes in prevention.

We thank the bill's authors, Senator Feyen and Representative Rozar, and look forward to working with them to promote policies that support healthy aging.

Please support SB 407 to help the Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging reduce older adult falls in Wisconsin.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this legislation.

Martha Cranley
State Director
AARP Wisconsin

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Kayla Wolf. I am a resident of Darien, WI, municipality 64-004. I have lived in Wisconsin for 36 years.

I am writing you to URGE you to vote NO on senate bills 479 and 480.

My 9 year old son, fully awake. Trembling. Describing to me his recent nightmare. His eyes well with tears as he explains how horrified he was while watching his room fill with menstrual blood. He was trapped. Watching the blood flood his floor and rise upwards; covering his walls along with everything in sight.

There are no words on this planet to describe to you the sheer agony I feel when trying to imagine the range of complex emotions my small child experiences while he feels trapped inside of his own body.

My son's biggest fear is bleeding from his own body; menstruating. Growing breasts. The thought of these things cripple him with anxiety.

These things can EASILY be prevented. Since we met Jake's beautiful medical team at Children's Hospital Wisconsin, and secured him with gender affirming care; puberty blockers-- he has not experienced 1 nightmare. 1 emotional breakdown. Not one. He is one of the lucky ones. He will have 18 months of confirmed care. We need this to continue. You cannot take that away from him.

You cannot take that away from ANY child. Taking away their humanity. Their identity.... you cannot. Children will suffer. Children will DIE. Their blood will be on your hands.

Kayla L. Wolf
64-004,53114



WISCONSIN COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

Testimony

To: Members of the Senate Committee on Health
From: Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA)
Date: October 12, 2023
Re: Senate Bill 480
Position: Oppose

The Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA) appreciates the opportunity to offer this written testimony for your consideration. WCASA is a hybrid organization: functioning both to support member Sexual Assault Service Providers (SASPs), while advancing the anti -sexual assault movement in the state and nationally.

SB 480 not only represents one of the most extreme political attacks on transgender people in recent memory, but it also runs counter to two central tenets of sexual violence prevention, namely bodily autonomy and gender socialization. WCASA believes all people deserve to have authority over their own bodies, including the ability to make health care decisions. Empowering people to make decisions related to their bodies is a strengths-based approach to decreasing vulnerability and enhances the ability of people to maintain healthy boundaries. Additionally, when adults tell children they have the right to say “no” in cases of child sexual abuse, it is important to model this behavior and promote skills for youth to make their own decisions about their bodies at a young age. This legislation sends the exact opposite message as it aims to take away the choices of transgender youth and prevent them from living as the gender they know they are.

Gender socialization, including the rigid adherence to traditional gender roles about masculinity and femininity, is one of the social norms that contributes to sexual violence. WCASA believes that giving youth the skills to question and combat rigid gender stereotypes at a young age will help them question and combat harmful sexual based gender stereotypes as they age. Additionally, LGBTQ+ people are often discriminated against for not conforming to traditional norms of masculinity and femininity. SB 480 not only displays a fundamental lack of understanding about transgender children, but it also bans best practice medical care that is backed by leading authorities like the American Medical Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Denying access to this best practice medical care to transgender youth can be life threatening. Research show that transgender youth whose families support their gender identity have a 52% decrease in suicidal thoughts, 46% decrease in suicide attempts, and significant increases in overall health.¹

¹ LGBTQ Policy Spotlight: Efforts to Ban Health Care for Transgender Youth. Movement Advancement Project. 2021. Available at <https://www.lgbtmap.org/file/policy-spotlight-trans-health-care-bans.pdf>

SB 480 also compounds the discrimination transgender people already experience in their daily lives. For example, transgender people experience higher rates of bullying, anxiety, and depression², while according to the Trevor Project's 2020 National Youth Survey on LGBTQ mental health, 40% of LGBTQ+ youth and more than 50% of transgender and nonbinary youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the past 12 months³. This is a crisis that will only be exacerbated by efforts to take away health care options for young people. Furthermore, transgender women and girls face discrimination and violence that make it difficult to stay in school. For example, 22% of transgender women who were perceived as transgender in school were harassed to such an extent that they had to leave school because of it.⁴ Transgender people are also disproportionately impacted by sexual violence, as nearly half of all transgender adults report experiencing sexual assault⁵. Those rates are even higher for Black and Native American transgender people, who thus experience intersecting discrimination and violence related to race and gender identity/expression⁶.

Finally, WCASA believes that medical decisions are best left to patients, their families, and health care providers, in accordance with best medical best practices. Politicians should not interfere with those decisions. When lawmakers disregard medical best practices and limit the ability of healthcare professionals to do their jobs, it's contrary to public health and wellbeing. SB 480 opens the door to even more obstacles to people accessing the health care they already need and often struggle to access. We don't need politicians making it harder for kids who are transgender by denying them access to best practice medical care and singling them out for increased bullying and harassment.

For the reasons stated above, WCASA opposes SB 480, and we urge this committee to take no further action on this legislation. Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, you can reach me at ianh@wcasa.org.

² Turban, Jack L. "Research Review: Gender Identity in Youth: Treatment Paradigms and Controversies." *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*. October 2017.

³ <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2020/?section=Research-Methodology>

⁴ James, S.E., Herman, J.L., Rankin, S., Keisling, M., Mottet, L., & Anafi, M. (2016). *The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey*. Washington, D.C.: National Center for Transgender Equality.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.



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TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 480
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, AGING AND LONG-TERM CARE
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2023
JACK HOOGENDYK, LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY DIRECTOR
WISCONSIN FAMILY ACTION

Thank you, Chair Cabral-Guevara and committee members, for the opportunity to testify regarding Senate Bill 480. I am Jack Hoogendyk, Legislative and Policy Director for Wisconsin Family Action. Wisconsin Family Action supports Senate Bill 480.

This bill, which has been called the Help Not Harm bill, will help children struggling to embrace their biological sex by protecting them from harmful drugs and surgery. We need to protect minors from making decisions they may regret later, especially decisions with permanent life-long impact. That is what this bill affirms.

Allowing doctors to give developing youth puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and even perform surgeries violates the first duty of medicine: do no harm. Cross-sex hormones and puberty blockers and so-called “transgender surgery” come with significant risk for long-term, irreversible harm to minors. According to the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, risks for biological females using puberty blockers include, irreversible infertility, severe liver dysfunction, coronary artery disease including heart attacks, hypertension and more. The cross-sex hormone risks for biological males include irreversible infertility, blood clots, coronary artery disease including heart attacks, and Type 2 diabetes.

A small but growing number of children struggle to embrace their biological sex, instead feeling that they were born in the wrong body and “are” the opposite sex. The majority of these children will come to reconcile with their biological sex. For those who are especially struggling or who suffer from related mental illnesses, talk therapy and other standard mental health interventions may be appropriate. However, in recent years, politicized medical organizations have pushed referring children for invasive, harmful forms of so-called “treatment” that can include off-label use of puberty blockers, administration of cross-sex hormones above naturally occurring levels, and even – sometimes – surgery. The pressure is so great that in many states, medical professionals are legally barred from offering helpful talk therapy to children for this issue.

Children have so much to learn and are naturally incapable of making many important decisions in their early years. They are not allowed to get a tattoo, buy cough syrup over-the-counter, gamble, drink alcohol, purchase cigarettes, or consent to most medical treatments. They cannot go to certain movies or vote until they are 18 years old. There is something children need to learn as they grow; it’s called wisdom. This is gained not only from experience but also from the development of their brain which can take until they are well into their 20s when they begin to associate cause and effect.

Significantly, we know 80 to 90 percent of children outgrow gender dysphoria if untreated – so in many cases, for the dysphoria itself, good parenting and “watchful waiting” is all that is required. Given this reality, drastic and harmful interventions with lifelong physical and psychological consequences are even more concerning.

Madam Chair, surgery and drugs won’t heal a hurting heart. In fact, suicide rates are higher in adolescents who transition. In one Swedish study, as Dr. Ryan Anderson points out in a paper he wrote three years ago,

“[10] to 15 years after surgical reassignment, the suicide rate of those who had undergone sex-reassignment surgery rose to 20 times that of comparable peers.”¹

Twenty other states have already passed similar laws, recognizing that the duty of medical personnel when it comes to young people struggling with gender confusion is to truly help them, not hurt them.

Let’s protect children from making a life-altering decision before they have the wisdom to know what is best. Wisconsin Family Action urges the passage of SB 480. Thank you.

¹ [“Transitioning” Procedures Don’t Help Mental Health, Largest Dataset Shows | The Heritage Foundation](#)

Testimony before the Senate Health Committee

by Kris Krasnowski – Executive Director, Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging
October 12, 2023

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today in support of SB 407. I also want to acknowledge and thank Senators Feyen and Quinn and Representative Rozar for introducing this Healthy Aging Grants legislation. My name is Kris Krasnowski, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging – a non-profit organization working to improve the health and well-being of people as they age in Wisconsin. SB 407 would strengthen several programs that prevent conditions threatening to the health, safety and independence of Wisconsin's older adults. Today however, I want to focus on falls prevention.

Wisconsin has the highest rate of deadly falls among older adults in the nation – 1,635 older people died due to a fall in 2021.

Each year, more than one in four older adults has a fall -- 20% of them result in an injury like a hip fracture or traumatic brain injury making falls the number one cause of injuries in older adults. More than 43,000 older people went to the emergency department due to a fall in 2021 at an average cost of nearly \$1,800 per visit; over 10,000 were hospitalized at an average cost of over \$20,000 per hospitalization.

Behind those numbers are real people. Somebody's mother or father. Somebody's grandparent. Somebody's neighbor. Community members become hospital patients and sometimes nursing home residents. Family members become caregivers. Just one fall can have a big impact on many people.

Falls also have serious implications for public safety and the capacity of Wisconsin's EMS providers who responded to over 130,000 older adult falls making it the top injury response in 2022. Nearly one in five ambulance runs were for older adult falls that year the majority of which happened at home.

The good news is that while they are common, falls are not an inevitable part of aging. We know what factors induce a fall and we have strategies to address those factors. With state investment in falls prevention, we can help people reduce their falls risk.

SB 407 would do two critical things to prevent falls: 1) provide funding to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services to support the Falls Free Wisconsin initiative and 2) expand and strengthen the multi-disciplinary, multi-stakeholder Falls Free Wisconsin Coalition. Specifically, this state investment would:

- Provide communities with seed grants for sustainable falls prevention initiatives, an approach with demonstrated success.
- Help older people, their families and caregivers recognize the dangers of falling and provide resources to minimize their risk.
- Expand access across Wisconsin to programs such as Stepping On that are proven to reduce falls.
- Expand the Falls Free Wisconsin Coalition bringing professionals from aging, public safety and health care together to develop and spread best practices for falls prevention and strategies to sustain them long term.

We recognize that this is one-time state funding and we will, over the coming two years, work toward diversified funding streams to support the effort. We also look forward to demonstrating the impact that this investment makes on older adults and the systems that support them.

Today, one in four Wisconsinites is 60 or older; by 2040, it will be one in three. Now is the time to engage older adults, their families and caregivers and arm them with the knowledge and tools they need to keep themselves healthy and injury-free for as long as possible. I urge you to vote in favor of SB 407.

Thank you.

Testimony Against SB480
Senate Committee on Health | October 12, 2023
Johanna Schmidt, MPA Candidate at the La Follette School of Public Affairs

Senator Cabral-Guevara, Senator Testin, Senator Felzkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, and Senator Carpenter,

Thank you for the opportunity today to testify against Senate Bill 480, which would prohibit gender transition and medical intervention for individuals under 18 years old.

I am a graduate student at the La Follette School of Public Affairs, the public policy program at UW-Madison, just about a mile away from here on the UW campus. La Follette teaches evidence-based policymaking. I therefore thought it would be appropriate to start my testimony by talking about the evidence for why this bill would be harmful, like a 2020 survey of over 30,000 queer youth and over 10,000 transgender and nonbinary youth that found an association between gender affirming hormone therapy and lower rates of depression and suicidality¹. Or a study using ten years of data that involved over 2,000 transgender individuals and found that gender affirming surgery reduced the likelihood of being treated for a mood or anxiety disorder by 8% each year since the surgery². Or a 2018 meta-review that found that hormone therapy has "positive effects at multiple levels on mood and behavioral health of transgender and gender dysphoric individuals"³.

But the truth is that I am not here today because of my policy background. I am here today on behalf of my sister, who came out as trans a few years ago and has since started hormone therapy. I am here on behalf of my roommate, who is trans and has started to consider what medically transitioning might look like for him. I am here on behalf of the many trans people in my life whom I love very much, as well as on behalf of those that I do not know personally but who would be harmed by this bill.

I have seen firsthand the ways that gender-affirming care has improved the health and wellbeing of my trans loved ones, including my sister. Since coming out and beginning to transition, she has been happier and more social. Gender affirming care has helped to reduce her dysphoria. She is able to live authentically as herself. The process of transitioning has been vital for her health and happiness.

This bill would take all that away from the trans youth in our state. It would force them to live with their dysphoria and put them at greater risk of mental health issues, including suicide. And

¹ Green, Amy E., Jonah P. DeChants, Myeshia N. Price, and Carrie K. Davis. "Association of gender-affirming hormone therapy with depression, thoughts of suicide, and attempted suicide among transgender and nonbinary youth." *Journal of Adolescent Health* 70, no. 4 (2022): 643-649.

² Bränström, Richard, and John E. Pachankis. "Reduction in mental health treatment utilization among transgender individuals after gender-affirming surgeries: a total population study." *American journal of psychiatry* 177, no. 8 (2020): 727-734.

³ Nguyen, Hillary B., Alexis M. Chavez, Emily Lipner, Liisa Hantsoo, Sara L. Kornfield, Robert D. Davies, and C. Neill Epperson. "Gender-affirming hormone use in transgender individuals: impact on behavioral health and cognition." *Current psychiatry reports* 20 (2018): 1-9.

moreover, it sends the message that transitioning is dangerous and that there is something wrong with being trans. It is therefore obvious to me and many other Wisconsinites that the goal of this bill is to make life harder for trans youth. It is not grounded in concern or evidence; it is purely the result of anti-trans prejudice and hatred. It would hurt trans youth and the trans community at large. People like my sister. People like my roommate.

It is unacceptable that our government is trying to intervene in people's healthcare in this way. This is a clear example of government overreach—medical decisions should be made by youths themselves with their doctors, not politicians. And I think that here it is important to point out that the American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, the Endocrine Society, the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association all support providing gender affirming care to youth⁴. If the Committee truly cares about children—all children, including trans children—then they should be working towards making medical transition more accessible, not less.

Hatred has no place in our state. Wisconsin must remain a state where trans youth are loved, accepted, and treated with respect. I urge you to stop this bill from moving forward.

⁴ Dawson, Lindsey, and Jennifer Kates. "Youth Access to Gender Affirming Care: The Federal and State Policy Landscape." *Kaiser Family Foundation* (2022) <https://www.kff.org/other/issue-brief/youth-access-to-gender-affirming-care-the-federal-and-state-policy-landscape/>

Good morning, Members of the Senate Committee on Health, Senator Cabral-Guevera, Senator Testin, Senator Felzkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, and Senator Carpenter,

I'm Gina Senarighi. I grew up in Door County, Wisconsin, graduated from UW Whitewater in 2002, and now live in Madison Wisconsin with my partner and two young kids. I am a registered voter, a trained mental health professional, and a member of the LGBTQ+ community.

I came to you to urge you to vote no on Senate Bills 479 and 480 for three key reasons.

First, as I am sure you know, in order to operate a healthcare provider under Wisconsin definition 146.81 there is a high standard for ethical care maintained by professional organizations. These organizations ensure healthcare is provided by educated, trained professionals who conduct business in alignment with best practices in the field.

The American Psychological Association, the American Counseling Association, and the National Association of Social Workers all unequivocally require professional counselors and therapists to provide gender-affirming care in order to maintain membership. This means ethical treatment requires us to become trained in gender-affirming care or regularly refer clients to gender-affirming providers. If you approve 479 you are asking mental health providers in the state of Wisconsin to operate out of compliance with the professional standards and codes of ethics set by the most respected colleagues in our fields.

Only one of you is a professional healthcare provider. I cannot imagine any of you would suggest your experience in agriculture, insurance or other fields has given you the training required to consult on therapeutic scope of practice within the mental health field. I have attached the position statements and ethics codes of all three major mental health professional organizations for your review so you can plainly see the bind you are putting healthcare providers in if you choose to support this unnecessary bill.

My fear here is not only for the care of the transgender community but also for access to healthcare for the larger community. It has been well-documented that we are in a mental health crisis in this country. It is easy to see if you have sought referrals for mental health treatment- the wait lists are long, sometimes months for families to find care for common conditions like ADHD, anxiety, and depression. Other states have passed similar legislation that targets providers and those providers have left the field of work or the state to practice without unnecessary legislation like this. There are large portions of this country without basic gynecological care now because healthcare providers are already under enough pressure without bills like this.

You can easily avoid this outcome for all of us and for you if you oppose 479.

Second, in 15 years serving LGBTQ+ populations as a therapist I had the privilege of writing letters to approve gender-affirming care on behalf of hundreds of adult clients. All of them wished they had been afforded the opportunity to postpone the teenage puberty they experienced. All of them would have avoided harmful discrimination, unnecessary mental health challenges, and in my professional opinion undue stress had they been able to experience only one puberty process in their lifetime. Using puberty delaying medical treatment not only saves lives, it improves lives.

And that is really what you are keeping from transgender nonbinary and two-spirit citizens of Wisconsin when you suggest bill 480.

Opposing Senate Bill 480 is the only way you move forward without adding unnecessary harm to the transgender people you represent.

I am aware the other concern people often have for transgender youth is that they may one day regret surgical decisions if they are able to be one of the 200 incredibly unlikely gender-affirming surgeries that happen annually among kids under 18. Yet the unlikely case that a teenager is able to receive one of these surgical interventions, less than 1% regret it or change their mind according to the most recent published studies.

The American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) released it's report in 2021 stating that over 90K plastic surgeries were performed on youth ages 13-17 across America. Where is the concern for the 3000+ cisgender girls who receive breast implants each year with a 12-15% surgical regret and reconstruction rate? Where is the concern for the 7-15% rate among of rhinoplasty among youth 13-17? Where is the outrage on behalf of all the young boys taking testosterone for their athletic performance? All of these medical interventions have a higher rate of reported regrets and harmful long-term health outcomes. You can read these statistics in the ASPS report attached to my testimony.

If this committee on health is truly concerned with health in Wisconsin, your focus is on the wrong treatments and the wrong population. If you truly value healthcare for ALL young Wisconsinites you will oppose 480.

Finally, let me say this, I know you will hear from many parents and family members today. I share their concerns as a parent and someone who has LGBTQ+ family members. But I want you to hear this, as a therapist in private practice I am privy to the private lives of many families across this country. In 15+ years, I saw countless adults who were raised by elected officials and leaders in communities of faith that would support hateful and unnecessary bills like this. I am not here to advocate for my children, because I have the privilege to access care for them no matter where their gender journey takes them- even if it takes us to another state. I am here because I can guarantee all of you have family within this community- even if you don't realize it this morning. On behalf of your children, grandchildren, and extended family members who may never come out to you, do not support these bills.

Not for me and my children, but I beg you if you do not want to leave a legacy of harm you will oppose these bills.

I trust you share in my care for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you **OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480**. You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, therapists, doctors, and families.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,


Gina Senarighi, Madison Wisconsin

Sunday, October 15, 2023, 10:30 am, ABUMC
20th Sunday after Pentecost
Earn. Save. Give. Week 2: “Money–The Excellent Gift”
Pastor Ellen AV Item MUSIC
*Stand in body/spirit **Bold = together**

GATHERING
Opening Slideshow

Prelude

Preparing our hearts and minds for worship

Greeting

- Good Morning! Welcome to Worship!
- Rev. Ellen Rasmussen, Lead Pastor, pronouns
- Thank you for choosing to be here, whether in person or online. Your spirit and gift of presence make a difference. Thank you!
- Online folks, please let us know who you are and where you are from. Thank you.
- For those of you who are gathered in-house, we’ve got an envelope that we ask you to fill out, and we’ll collect them with the offering later in the service.
- We are a praying people. If you have joys or concerns to lift up, please complete a prayer card in-house or share a note in the comment section online. Thank you.

What's Happening In Worship Today

- We gather to bring honor, glory, and praise to God.
- The message today from our series, *Earn. Save. Give.*, is to see money as an excellent gift, for each of us to understand our calls, and to make decisions about how we will manage our earnings in ways that are consistent with our commitment to Christ
- Let us join together in our Call to Worship. It is adapted from a prayer by Wesleyan scholar, Paul Chilcote. Please rise in body and spirit, here and at home.
-

Note to Team: We will use this Call to Worship weekly in October.

***Call to Worship¹**

One: Steward of All Life,
We gather in your name to bring
 honor, glory, and praise to you.
We gather to give praise and to open
 our hearts to you and your ways.
John Wesley teaches us many things,
 including three rules that are essential to
 the proper use of resources.

¹Chilcote, Paul. *Praying in the Wesleyan Spirit: 52 Prayers for Today*. Nashville: Upper Room, 2001. Adapted by RE Rasmussen.

We lift them to you now.

Enable us to *gain* all we can.

Many: But as you bless our labors,
guard us from harming our health,
our minds, or our neighbors
in the process.

May honest work and common sense
be our guide.

One: Encourage us to *save* all we can.

Many: Guard us from wasting your precious
resources to gratify unhealthy and
prideful desires.

May the most important legacy
we leave behind be that of justice,
integrity, and generosity.

One: And so empower us to *give* all we can.

Many: In our efforts to be good stewards
of your many blessings,
give us what we need to provide caringly
for those we love,
open our hearts to the needs of those
who are close at hand,

**and create a generous spirit within us
to do good to all.**

One: Teach us, O generous God, what it means to be
stewards of your treasures. Amen.

*Let us raise our voices in song with the singing of Christ, from
Whom All Blessings Flow, UMH #550. It's a Charles Wesley
hymn:*

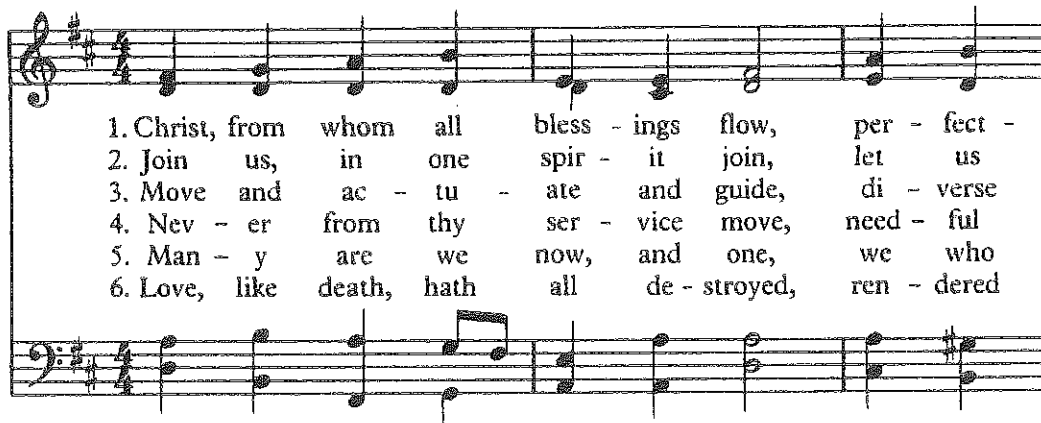
Hymn Slides

***Hymn:**

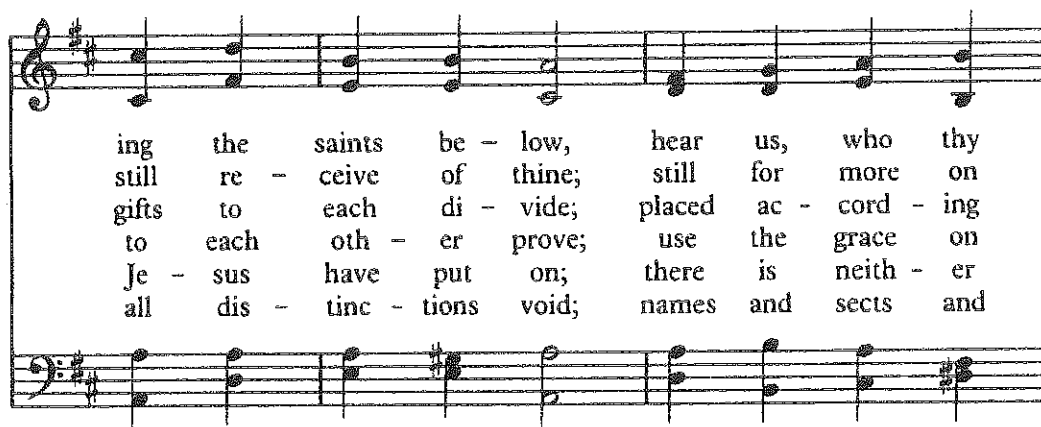
“ Christ, from Whom All Blessings Flow” UMH #550²
A Charles Wesley Hymn

² “Christ, from Whom All Blessings Flow.” Words: Charles Wesley, 1740. Music: Adapted from Orlando Gibbons, 1623. Public Domain.

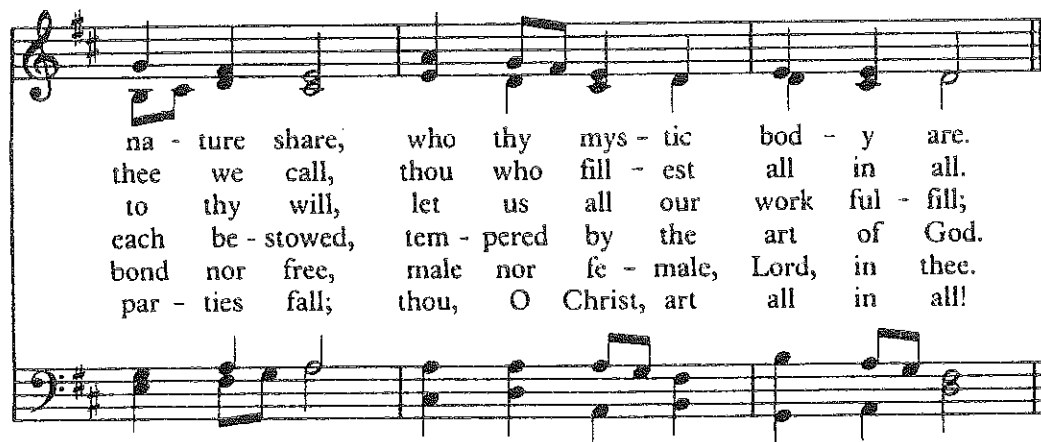
Christ, from Whom All Blessings Flow 550



1. Christ, from whom all bless - ings flow, per - lect -
 2. Join us, in one spir - it join, let us
 3. Move and ac - tu - ate and guide, di - verse
 4. Nev - er from thy ser - vice move, need - ful
 5. Man - y are we now, and one, we who
 6. Love, like death, hath all de - stroyed, ren - dered



ing the saints be - low, hear us, who thy
 still re - ceive of thine; still for more on
 gifts to each di - vide; placed ac - cord - ing
 to each oth - er prove; use the grace on
 Je - sus have put on; there is neith - er
 all dis - tinc - tions void; names and sects and



na - ture share, who thy mys - tic bod - y are.
 thee we call, thou who fill - est all in all.
 to thy will, let us all our work ful - fill;
 each be - stowed, tem - pered by the art of God.
 bond nor free, male nor fe - male, Lord, in thee.
 par - ties fall; thou, O Christ, art all in all!

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

Introduction to the Word³

Lord, open our hearts and minds by the power of your Holy Spirit, that, as the Scriptures are read and your Word proclaimed, we may hear with joy what you say to us today. Amen.

Scripture Readings

Luke 16. 1-13 MSG (The Message)⁴

Jesus said to his disciples, “There was once a rich man who had a manager. He got reports that the manager had been taking advantage of his position by running up huge personal expenses. So he called him in and said, ‘What’s this I hear about you? You’re fired. And I want a complete audit of your books.’

“The manager said to himself, ‘What am I going to do? I’ve lost my job as manager. I’m not strong enough for a laboring job, and I’m too proud to beg. . . . Ah, I’ve got a plan. Here’s what I’ll do . . . then when I’m turned out into the street, people will take me into their houses.’

³ UMC Book of Worship

⁴ The Message (MSG) Copyright © 1993, 2002, 2018 by Eugene H. Peterson

“Then he went at it. One after another, he called in the people who were in debt to his master. He said to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’

“He replied, ‘A hundred jugs of olive oil.’

“The manager said, ‘Here, take your bill, sit down here—quick now—write fifty.’

“To the next he said, ‘And you, what do you owe?’

“He answered, ‘A hundred sacks of wheat.’

“He said, ‘Take your bill, write in eighty.’

“Now here’s a surprise: The master praised the crooked manager! And why? Because he knew how to look after himself. Streetwise people are smarter in this regard than law-abiding citizens. They are on constant alert, looking for angles, surviving by their wits. I want you to be smart in the same way—but for what is right—using every adversity to stimulate you to creative survival, to concentrate your attention on the bare essentials, so you’ll live, really live, and not complacently just get by on good behavior.”

Jesus went on to make these comments:

If you're honest in small things,

you'll be honest in big things;

If you're a crook in small things,

you'll be a crook in big things.

If you're not honest in small jobs,

who will put you in charge of the store?

No worker can serve two bosses:

He'll either hate the first and love the second

Or adore the first and despise the second.

You can't serve both God and the Bank.

One: The Word of God for the People of God

Many: Thanks be to God

Invite Steve Lorge to come to the front while the congregation sings this Charles Wesley hymn. Explain about A Collection of Hymns for the Use by the People Called Methodist.

Hymn: “#312 - A Hymn for Believers Working”⁵

A Charles Wesley Hymn

TUNE: LAND OF REST

UMH #269 - “Lord Who Throughout These Forty Days”

**Summoned my labor to renew
And glad to act my part
Lord, in the name my work I do,
And with a single heart.**

**End of every action thou,
In all things thee I see;
Accept my hallowed labor now;
I do it unto thee.**

*Please welcome Steve Lorge to share this morning. Thank you,
Steve.*

STEWARDSHIP WITNESS - Steve Lorge

(3 to 4 minutes)

Message Slides

Message: “Money - The Excellent Gift”

⁵ Hymn #312 (1778) by Charles Wesley from *A Collection of Hymns for the Use by the People Called Methodist: Part IV for Believers, Section V: For Believers Working*. Editor: John Wesley, 1785. Music; USA folk melody; arr. By Annabel Morris Buchanan, 1938.; harm. by Charles H. Webb, 1988. Music © 1938, renewed 1966 J. Fischer and Bro. Co.; harm. © 1989 J. Fischer and Bro. Co. One License Song #195027 (music only). Used with permission.

Questions for Reflection and Action⁶

How do you understand the work you are doing or have done as a calling from God? Make a list of all of the “neighbors” who feel the impact of your work in “substance,” “body,” or “soul.”

In your time of prayer this week, read aloud Matthew 11.28-29 in the version closest to your heart. May you feel God’s comfort and grace surround you.

Prayers of the People

Prayer Cards

Pastoral Prayer: Together, let us pray for

...the people of this gathering...

...those who suffer and those in trouble...

...the concerns of this local community...

...the world, its people, and its leaders....

...the church universal—its leaders, its members, and its mission...

...for the communion of the saints...

⁶ Adapted from *Earn. Save. Give. Leader Guide* by James A. Harnish. © 2015 Abingdon Press. Used with permission.

**Praying for Change ~
Developing an Anti-Racist Community ~Journeying
Towards Beloved Community⁷**

It is autumn, God of seasons and creation, almost everyone's favorite time of year. In some parts of the world, we break the hold of the sweltering summer heat and watch the flora and fauna prepare for a winter to come. There is beauty all around us, when we have eyes to see and the patience to watch. The subtle changes of color on the trees around us herald a promise of change and a call to prepare. We give thanks for the quiet display of nature and ask that you revive our hearts as you bless our eyes and our souls with this beauty.

Train us to see beauty in the array of colors and stir up a response of gratitude and joy when we see the diversity of hue in the human canvas as well. May we learn to give thanks for those who are different from us and be inspired to surround ourselves with the full tapestry you have created of us all. Help us be a panorama of beauty by which others might find hope and solace in divided times. In Christ's name, amen.

⁷ Derek Weber, September 2023. From *Praying for Change: Daily Prayers for Anti-Racism*. UMC Discipleship, 10.05.2023. Used with permission.

Announcement Highlights

- All Saints Day, 11.05.2023 - please share the name and date of death of your loved one with our office staff
- Trunk or Treat 10.28.2023

Offering

Introduction to the Offering

Prayers, Presence, Gifts, Service, & Witness

October Coin: UMCOR

Collection & Music

Doxology UMH #95

“Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow”

THANKSGIVING

Prayer of Thanksgiving⁸

Generous God, you are the king of the universe! Everything belongs to you, yet you graciously provide for our smallest needs. You sent your Son Jesus, the Prince of Peace, to redeem us. We are grateful for your blessings, for we have enough to share. Help us to be faithful in our use of the resources you give us. We return a portion of your bounty for the work of the church. May people in our community rejoice in your goodness, through Christ, our Lord. Amen. (Luke 16:1-13)

Let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught in the version closest to your heart.

⁸ <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/offertory-prayers-and-invitation-for-september-2016>

Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

For Pastor Ellen, not included in print or slides:

Our Mother, who is in heaven and within us, we call upon your names. Your wisdom come. Your will be done, in all the spaces in which you dwell. Give us each day sustenance and perseverance. Remind us of our limits as we give grace to the limits of others. Separate us from the temptation of empire, and deliver us into community. For you are the dwelling place within us, and the celebration among us, now and forever. Amen.⁹

SENDING FORTH

Hymn Slides

Hymn: "Forth in Thy Name, O Lord"¹⁰ UMH #438 All

A Charles Wesley Hymn

1. Forth in thy name, O Lord, I go,
my daily labor to pursue;
thee, only thee, resolved to know
in all I think or speak or do.

2. The task thy wisdom hath assigned,
O let me cheerfully fulfill;
in all my works thy presence find,
and prove thy good and perfect will.

⁹ Rev. Yolanda M. Norton from *Beyonce Mass*. From p.285 *A Women's Lectionary for the Whole Church, Year W*. by Wilda C. Gafney. © 2021.

¹⁰ "Forth in Thy Name, O Lord." The United Methodist Hymnal #438. Words: Charles Wesley, 1749. Music: John Hatton, 1793. Public Domain.

3. Thee may I set at my right hand,
whose eyes mine inmost substance see,
and labor on at thy command,
and offer all my works to thee.

4. For thee delightfully employ
what e'er thy bounteous grace hath given;
and run my course with even joy,
and closely walk with thee to heaven.

Blessing¹¹

“Working For God” by Susanna Wesley

Grant unto me blessed, Lord, that great freedom of mind that I
might follow and attend on Jesus with a pure heart.

To be ever prepared and disposed to observe his example and
obey his precepts.

That I might manage the common affairs of life so as not to
misemploy or neglect the improvement of my talents.

To be industrious without covetousness.

Diligent without anxiety.

¹¹ Susanna Wesley Devotional Journal from *Hearts Aflame: Prayers of Susanna, John, and Charles Wesley* by Michael McMullen © 1995. Used with permission. Adapted by RE Rasmussen.

To be as exact in each punctilio (*point*) of action as if success depended upon it.

Yet so resigned as to leave all events to Thee and still attributing to Thee the praise of every good work.

Go forth, Beloved, as agents of justice, healing, and hope as you continue to transform the world in love.

Postlude

Credits & Closing Slides

Inside the Transgender Empire

H imprimis.hillsdale.edu/inside-the-transgender-empire/

Christopher F. Rufo

Imprimis (im-pri-mis), [Latin]: in the first place

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The following is adapted from a talk delivered on September 12, 2023, at the Allan P. Kirby, Jr. Center for Constitutional Studies and Citizenship on Hillsdale's Washington, D.C., campus, as part of the AWC Family Foundation Lecture Series.

The transgender movement is pressing its agenda everywhere. Most publicly, activist teachers are using classrooms to propagandize on its behalf and activist health professionals are promoting the mutilation of children under the euphemistic banner of “gender-affirming care.” The sudden and pervasive rise of this movement provokes two questions: where did it come from, and how has it proved so successful? The story goes deeper than most Americans know.

In the late 1980s, a group of academics, including Judith Butler, Gayle Rubin, Sandy Stone, and Susan Stryker, established the disciplines of “queer theory” and “transgender studies.” These academics believed gender to be a “social construct” used to oppress racial and sexual minorities, and they denounced the traditional categories of man and woman as a false binary that was conceived to support the system of “heteronormativity”—i.e., the white, male, heterosexual power structure. This system, they argued, had to be ruthlessly deconstructed. And the best way to achieve this, they argued further, was to promote transgenderism. If men can become women, and women men, they believed, the natural structure of Creation could be toppled.

Susan Stryker, a male-to-female transgender professor currently at the University of Arizona, revealed the general thrust and tone of transgender ideology in his Kessler Award Lecture at the City University of New York in 2008, describing his work as “a secular sermon that unabashedly advocates embracing a disruptive and refigurative genderqueer or transgender power as a spiritual resource for social and environmental transformation.” In Stryker’s best-known essay, “My Words to Victor Frankenstein above the Village of Chamounix: Performing Transgender Rage,” he contends that the “transsexual body” is a “technological construction” that represents a war against Western society. “I am a transsexual, and therefore I am a monster,” Stryker writes. And this monster, he continues, is destined to channel its “rage and revenge” against the “naturalized heterosexual order”; against “traditional family values”; and against the “hegemonic oppression” of nature itself.

It is clear from this and from other transgender scholarship that the transgender movement is inherently political. Its reconstruction of personal identity is meant to advance a collective political reconstruction or transformation. Some trans activists even view their movement as the future of Marxism. In a collection of essays titled *Transgender Marxism*, activist writer Rosa Lee argues that trans people can serve as the new vanguard of the proletariat, promising to abolish heteronormativity in the same way that orthodox Marxism promised to abolish capitalism.

“In a different era,” Lee writes,

Marxists spoke of the construction of a “new socialist man” as a crucial task in the broader process of socialist construction. Today, in a time of both rising fascism and an emergent socialist movement, our challenge is transsexualising our Marxism. We should think [of] the project of transition to communism in our time—communisation—as including the transition to new communist selves, new ways of being and relating to one another.

This is the great project of the transgender movement: to abolish the distinctions of man and woman, to transcend the limitations established by God and nature, and to connect the personal struggle of trans individuals to the political struggle to transform society in a radical way.

From the Fringes to the Center

The trans movement was hatched, then, on the fringes of American academia. But how did it move so quickly to the center of American public life? Like many other things, it began with a flood of cash, as some of the wealthiest people in the country began devoting enormous sums of money to promote transgenderism.

One of these people is Jennifer Pritzker, who was born James Pritzker in 1950. After serving several years in the U.S. Army, Pritzker went into business, having inherited a sizable part of the Hyatt hotel fortune. In 2013, he announced a male-to-female gender transition and was celebrated in the press as the “first trans billionaire.” Almost immediately, he began donating untold millions to universities, schools, hospitals, and activist organizations to promote queer theory and trans medical experiments.

This money was allied with political power, as Pritzker's cousin, Illinois Democrat Governor J.B. Pritzker, signed legislation in 2019, his first year in office, to inject gender theory into the state education curriculum and to direct state Medicaid funds toward transgender surgeries. Speaking before an audience of trans activists, he proclaimed:

[O]ur state government is firmly on your side, on the side of every gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer person in the state of Illinois. . . . Those of you in this room know better than anyone that marriage equality was never the endgame. . . . We're gonna make sure that all transgender Illinoisans are ensured their basic human rights and that healthcare services are provided to them so that they can thrive.

Here's an example of how this combination of well-funded activism and political influence works in practice: Pritzker-funded activists at Lurie Children's Hospital (the largest children's hospital in Chicago) provide local schools with training, materials, and personnel who promote gender transitions for children, using the hospital's reputation to give their ideology a scientific veneer. And the more one investigates, the worse it gets. Children are exposed, for instance, not only to trans ideology, but to concepts such as “kink” (unusual tastes in sexual behavior), “BDSM” (bondage, domination, submission, and masochism), binders to flatten breasts, and prosthetic penises.

Lurie Children's Hospital, through its outreach presentations in Chicago public schools, encourages teachers and school administrators to support “gender diversity” in their districts, automatically “affirm” students who announce sexual transitions, and “communicate a non-binary understanding of gender” to children in the classroom. The objective, as one version of the presentation suggests, is to disrupt the “entrenched [gender] norms in western society” and facilitate the transition to a more “gender creative” world. School districts are encouraged to designate “Gender Support Coordinators” to help facilitate children's sexual and gender transitions, which, under the recommended “confidentiality” policy, can be kept secret from parents and families.

In effect, this results in a sophisticated school-to-gender-clinic pipeline. Teachers, counselors, doctors, and activists on social media and elsewhere—many of whom are employed or subsidized by members of the Pritzker family—push children in the direction of what Chicago-area “detransitioner” Helena Kerschner, recalling her own experience, calls “the trans identity rabbit hole.” And despite frequent claims to the contrary, this is not a temporary or reversible process. Of the children who begin puberty blockers, the medical literature suggests that approximately 95 percent move on to cross-sex hormones, and that 50 percent of the females who begin cross-sex hormone treatments move on to “trans-affirming” surgeries.

The Synthesis of All Oppressions

Another place my investigation of the trans movement has taken me is Highland Park, Michigan, a city of roughly 9,000 residents located about six miles north of downtown Detroit. Highland Park has been plagued by poverty, violence, and crime for decades. Many of its homes and businesses have been abandoned or demolished. It is teetering on the edge of insolvency, yet it is home to one institution that is overflowing with funds: the Ruth Ellis Center, metro Detroit’s central laboratory for the synthesis of transgender science and politics.

The Ruth Ellis Center’s marketing pitch is an amalgam of all the usual euphemisms: “trauma-informed care,” “restorative justice,” “harm reduction,” “racial equity,” and “gender-affirming care.” In the name of these things, the Ellis Center and its partners conduct large-scale medical experiments on a population of predominantly poor black youths.

Dr. Maureen Connolly, a pediatrician at Henry Ford Health, leads the Ellis Center’s medical partnership, providing puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and surgical referrals to scores of Detroit kids. Here’s how she describes the child sex-change process:

Transitioning is an umbrella term to describe the process that someone goes through to bring their external self more closely into alignment with their gender identity. For some people that might mean changing their gender expression and the clothes that they wear or how they wear their hair. It might mean using a new name and different pronouns. And that’s wonderful. For others, it can involve taking medication to make their body more closely aligned with how they identify in terms of gender—typically, that’s masculinizing or feminizing medications or hormone therapy. People can also choose to pursue gender-affirming surgeries, which are surgical interventions to bring their body more closely in alignment with their gender identity.

Keep in mind, again, that in the context of her role at the Ellis Center, Connolly is not talking here about the affluent, educated, male-to-female trans individuals who serve as the public face of the trans movement. She is mostly talking about kids from the Detroit ghetto who

suffer from high rates of family breakdown, substance abuse, mental illness, and self-destructive behavior. As such, one might suppose that they are especially vulnerable to the claim that gender transition will solve all their problems.

“My name is Righteous, first and foremost,” says an Ellis Center patient who now identifies as non-binary and uses they/them pronouns:

I think I might have been about eight years old when I remembered or that I recall having any thought of being transgender or gender non-conforming. . . . It felt like I was an outsider to this whole world of America. On top of not being, you know, a European-American, I was black. . . . Most of my dysphoria comes from people misgendering me. With gender-affirming care, I could get the hormones I needed for free.

Righteous is thus a perfect example of the new synthesis of transgender science and politics. She works as an activist not only for the trans movement, but also for a broader intersectional coalition (i.e., a coalition of oppressed and marginalized groups), including, for instance, the movement to abolish the police. She represents the identity of the oppressed by both nature and nurture and marshals this unique “positionality” to advance the full suite of left-wing social policies.

Frankenstein Redux

In 1818, Mary Shelley wrote the famous novel *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*. The premise of the book is that modern science, stripped from the constraints of ethics and nature, will end up creating monsters. “Trans-affirming” doctors are the post-modern version of the book’s protagonist, Doctor Frankenstein.

According to survey data, up to 80 percent of trans individuals suffer from serious psychopathologies and one-quarter of black trans youth attempt suicide each year. “Gender-affirming care” largely fails to solve these problems, yet the doctors use these failures to justify even more extreme interventions up to the final one: genital reconstruction.

Dr. Blair Peters is a plastic surgeon (he uses he/they pronouns) who performs trans genital surgeries at the publicly-funded Oregon Health & Science University and whose specialty is creating artificial sex organs. “I think what we’re becoming very known for at OHSU is genital surgery,” he says. “A prime example of that is a procedure called phalloplasty, which is the creation of a penis. And we now have a robotic vaginoplasty program [that] has been a kind of game changer for patient care.”

As I have previously detailed in *City Journal*, the process for robot-assisted vaginoplasty is gruesome:

According to a handbook published by OHSU, surgeons first cut off the head of the penis and remove the testicles. Then they turn the penile-scrotal skin inside out and, together with abdomen cavity tissue, fashion it into a crude, artificial vagina. “The robotic arms are put through small incisions around your belly button and the side of your belly,” the handbook reads. “They are used to create the space for your vaginal canal between your bladder and your rectum.”

This procedure is plagued with complications. OHSU warns of wound separation, tissue necrosis, graft failure, urine spraying, hematoma, blood clots, vaginal stenosis, rectal injury, fistula, and fecal accidents. Patients must stay in the hospital for a minimum of five days following the procedure, receiving treatment for surgical wounds and having fluid drained through plastic tubes. Once they are home, patients must continue transgender hormone treatments and manually dilate their surgically created “neo-vagina” in perpetuity; otherwise, the tissue will heal, and the cavity will close.

The castration business is booming. According to Peters, the gender clinic at OHSU has “the highest volume on the West Coast”—and with the help of the robot, his team can perform multiple vaginoplasties per day. The phalloplasty program has a 12-to-18-month waiting list for consultations and an additional three-to-six-month waiting list for surgical appointments.

A less common but more symbolically apt surgery performed by Peters and his colleagues is known as “nullification,” in which a smooth, continuous skin covering from the abdomen to the groin is created following a castration or vaginectomy. In other words, the genitalia are replaced by nothing. Nullification surgery is the perfect symbol for the ideology behind the trans movement: the pursuit of the Latin *nullum*, meaning “nothing”; or the related *nihil*, the root of the English word “nihilism.” Trans ideology is animated by a profound nihilism that denies human nature and enables barbarism in the name of progress.

The future of transgender medicine is in flux. Major American institutions have rallied to its support, with the major medical associations going so far as to call on the federal government to investigate and prosecute its critics. At the same time, some cracks are showing. Detransitioners, a group comprised of mostly young women who have accepted their biological sex after transitioning to various degrees, are going public about the dangers of gender medicine in deeply affecting personal terms. Organizations such as Do No Harm have filed lawsuits and launched advocacy campaigns to curb transgender procedures on minors. And increasing numbers of doctors, who had previously been cowed into silence, are beginning to speak out. State legislators have also taken notice. Earlier this year, I worked with whistleblowers at Texas Children’s Hospital to expose child sex-change procedures that were being conducted in secret. The exposé attracted the attention of Texas lawmakers, who immediately passed the final version of a bill to ban such procedures.

Jennifer Pritzker, Maureen Connolly, Blair Peters, and their ilk occupy the heights of power and prestige, but like Doctor Frankenstein they will not be able to escape the consequences of what they have created. They are condemning legions of children to a lifetime of sorrows and medical necessities, all based on dubious postmodern theories that do not meet the standard of Hippocrates' injunction in his work *Of the Epidemics*: "First, do no harm." Although individuals can be nullified, nature cannot. No matter how advanced trans pharmaceuticals and surgeries become, the biological reality of man and woman cannot be abolished; the natural limitations of God's Creation cannot be transcended. The attempt to do so will elicit the same heartbreak and alienation captured in the final scene of Mary Shelley's novel: the hulking monster, shunned by society and betrayed by his father, filled with despair and drifting off into the ice floes—a symbol of the consequence of Promethean hubris.

A doctor at a major children's hospital had this to say about what puberty blockers do to a child's mind, body, and soul:

This medication is called a "gonadotropin releasing hormone agonist" and it comes in the form of monthly injections or an implant. And because it simulates the activity of this hormone, it shuts down the activity of the hypothalamus. The hypothalamus is this almond-sized structure in your brain, it's one of the most primal structures we have, and it controls all the other hormonal structures in your body—your sexual development, your emotions, your fight-or-flight response, everything. . . . And I always think that if someone were to ask me, Where is it that you would look for the divine spark in each individual? I would say that it would be somewhere "beneath the inner chamber," which is the Greek derivation of the term hypothalamus. To shut down that system is to shut down what makes us human.

This is why we must fight to put the transgender empire out of business forever.



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

TO: Senator Cabral-Guevara, Chair
Members, Senate Committee on Health

FROM: Barbara Sella, Executive Director

DATE: October 12, 2023

RE: Support for Senate Bill 480 Help Not Harm Act

The Wisconsin Catholic Conference, the public policy voice of Wisconsin's Catholic bishops, supports Senate Bill 480, the "Help Not Harm Act," which prohibits gender transition medical intervention for individuals under 18 years of age.

As Catholics, we believe that every human being is made in the image and likeness of God and is deserving of dignity, respect, and compassion. We hear the anguish of children and their parents as they wrestle with severe gender dysphoria. They are members of our families and communities, and we call on everyone to encounter and accompany them with kindness.

We support this bill because science tells us that human beings have bodies that are either male or female, down to the cellular level. Sexual development disorders do occur, but these are extremely rare and do not undermine the biological distinction between male and female.

We support this bill because gender transitioning of children upends the natural development of the human person and sends the message that some bodies are mistakes that can be manipulated at will.

It is understandable that some parents agree to these interventions when they are told by medical professionals that their children may commit suicide if they are not allowed to transition. We do not fault these parents for doing so. But the pressure put on parents needs to be called out. No one is served when fears, threats, and intimidations are inflicted on vulnerable children and families.

It is possible to help children mature without resorting to sometimes irreversible hormonal and surgical interventions that can render them sterile, reduce their bone density, remove healthy parts of their body, and cause further physical and psychological damage. Most children experience some level of confusion and dislike for their bodies. However, in the absence of hormonal and surgical interventions, and with proper support, the majority of children with gender dysphoria will grow to accept their bodies as they are.

You will hear from medical professionals today that these interventions are safe and save lives. However, there are no long-term studies that show this. Reuters last year reported that, "Ever since the

first clinic to offer gender care to minors in the United States opened in Boston 15 years ago, none of the leading providers have published any systematic, long-term studies tracking outcomes for all patients.”¹

What we do know is that cross-sex hormones are not approved by the Federal Drug Administration for use in children.

What we do know is that European countries that once were at the forefront of gender transitioning for children have now scaled back in the face of adverse outcomes and criticisms that their earlier interventions were rushed.²

We know that the human brain is not fully developed until a person reaches his or her late twenties.

In the face of all these facts, it therefore makes no sense to support or encourage youth to undergo such radical procedures.

Some will argue that children’s bodily autonomy must be upheld at all costs. Where does this stop? Many children do not want to go to school or listen to their parents and teachers. Some desire to use illegal drugs or engage in other risky behaviors. It is the responsibility of adults to love and guide them during these challenging years so that they do not cause possibly irreversible damage to their minds and bodies.

At the very time all of us are becoming more aware of the man-made toxins that degrade our natural environment and physical bodies, it is deeply disturbing that certain pharmaceutical companies and medical professions are pushing drastic, artificial, and sometimes irreversible interventions on children.

So too, as we are realizing the harmful effects of social media on children, it is alarming to watch online influencers, social media companies, and other corporations creating and profiting off children’s confusion about their bodies.

¹ Reuters, “Why Detransitioners Are Crucial to the Science of Gender Care” (Dec. 12, 2022) <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/usa-transyouth-outcomes>.

² In 2022, the United Kingdom’s National Health Service announced plans to close the U.K.’s predominant gender clinic, in part because of allegations that it pushed large numbers of children into medical gender transition procedures. See Jasmine Andersson and Andre Rhoden-Paul, “NHS to close Tavistock child gender identity clinic,” BBC News (Jul. 28, 2022) <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-62335665>. Also in 2022, Sweden’s National Board of Health and Welfare updated its guidelines for the treatment of gender dysphoria in minors, moving away from hormone and puberty suppressing treatments for several reasons: “[T]he continued lack of reliable scientific evidence concerning the efficacy and the safety of both treatments [2], the new knowledge that detransition occurs among young adults [3], and the uncertainty that follows from the yet unexplained increase in the number of care seekers, an increase particularly large among adolescents registered as females at birth [4].” See National Board of Health and Welfare, “Care of children and adolescents with gender dysphoria,” <https://files.static-nzz.ch/2022/12/29/9a063296-b0a9-4e4d-a18f-110269f5e550.pdf>. And that same year, France’s National Academy of Medicine similarly advised “great medical caution” regarding transitioning children: “Although, in France, the use of hormone blockers or hormones of the opposite sex is possible with parental authorization at any age, the greatest reserve is required in their use, given the side effects such as impact on growth, bone fragility, risk of sterility, emotional and intellectual consequences and, for girls, symptoms reminiscent of menopause.” See National Academy of Medicine, “Medicine and gender transidentity in children and adolescents,” (Feb. 25, 2022) <https://www.academie-medecine.fr/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/22.2.25-Communiqu-PCRA-19-Gender-identity-ENG.pdf>.

Children's bodies should be off limits to medical experimentation and social manipulation.

Guardrails, such as Senate Bill 480, are needed so that children experiencing gender dysphoria are given the time, space, and support they need to mature naturally into adulthood. We urge you to support this bill so that alternative approaches to alleviating suffering in children can be found.



Wisconsin Chapter

American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



Wisconsin Medical Society



Kids deserve the best.



UWHealth

October 12, 2023

Chair Cabral-Guevara and Members of the Senate Committee on Health,

As hospitals, health systems and medical professional organizations serving patients throughout Wisconsin, we are trusted providers who deliver high quality health care to Wisconsinites from all corners of the state. Our patients and their families trust us with the most sensitive and complex medical conditions, including patients and their families seeking gender affirming health care services. **We are united in our opposition to SB 480** which would prohibit the delivery of certain gender affirming health care services to minors. We are supportive of constructive dialogue about how to best care for gender diverse youth, grounded in accepted clinical standards of care, respect and compassion. We oppose legislation that would eliminate patient and family access to aspects of gender affirming care and services. We also oppose the punitive nature of the bill that creates a process for licensing board review and calls for punishment of a health care provider by revoking such person's license to practice or prescribe medication if found to be in violation.

Why do we oppose this bill? Removing the ability for youth and their families to access this affirming care in Wisconsin will negatively impact these young people's well-being. We offer this care because our patients, their parents and guardians have come to us asking for this care. Across our health systems, this care delivery has some of the highest patient and family satisfaction rates. We stand with our patients and their families who seek individualized gender affirming health care services and our trusted providers and care teams who provide this care. We also support the clinical guidelines that inform this care.

We believe everyone, including LGBTQ+ kids and families, should be treated by their health care providers with respect, dignity and support. Based on our firsthand experience caring for patients, including working with their parents and caregivers, we know they do not come to the decision lightly to seek this care. We are committed to caring for transgender and gender diverse kids, teens and adults and supporting our clinics, programs and health care providers that provide such care.

Health care experts are best positioned, by education and experience, to determine with our patients and their families what care is most appropriate for them given each patient's unique needs. Wisconsin state government empowers the numerous health care professional regulatory boards to determine whether care provided in a particular case meets the standard of care, and to take appropriate disciplinary action if warranted. SB 480 undermines this system in two ways, first by eliminating an entire area of health care that may be in the

patient's best interests, and then preventing those regulatory boards from exercising their responsibilities to oversee their license-holders. Private health care decisions are best made among caregivers and their patients and should be free from government micromanagement.

Below, we provide a brief overview of clinical services, standards of care, individualized care plans and the consent process.

Clinical services and standards of care: The health care providers at gender affirming health clinics and programs include a variety of specialists in order to provide the care needed by patients and their families. Patients who participate in gender health programs have the opportunity to be seen by psychologists and other mental health therapists, endocrinologists, adolescent medicine specialists, advanced practice providers, speech pathologists and social workers. Treatment for patients seeking gender affirming care is provided in accordance with nationally and internationally recognized clinical guidelines, endorsed by major professional health organizations and established hospital practices. Every major U.S medical and mental health organization, including the [American Medical Association](https://www.ama-assn.org/press-center/press-releases/ama-reinforces-opposition-restrictions-transgender-medical-care)¹, [American Academy of Pediatrics](https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/142/4/e20182162/37381/Ensuring-Comprehensive-Care-and-Support-for)², [American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry](https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Latest_News/AACAP_Statement_Responding_to_Efforts_to_ban_Evidence-Based_Care_for_Transgender_and_Gender_Diverse.aspx)³, [American Psychological Association](https://www.apa.org/topics/lgbtq/division-54-statement-gender-affirmative-care.pdf)⁴ and the [American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists](https://www.acog.org/-/media/project/acog/acogorg/files/advocacy/policy-priorities/trans-care-adolescents-issue-brief.pdf)⁵, support access to gender-affirming support and care for transgender young people and adults. Expert medical [standards of care](https://www.wpath.org/publications/soc)⁶ on the provision of gender-affirming healthcare and mental health services have been continuously maintained and updated. Research shows evidence that people who have access to the care they need see a positive impact on their mental and physical health including a 2022 peer-reviewed [study](https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2789423)⁷ that found receipt of gender-affirming care among young people aged 13 to 20 was associated with 60% lower odds of depression and 73% lower odds of suicidality over a 12-month follow-up.

Gender dysphoria, if left untreated, can result in severe distress, depression and suicide. Research from the Trevor Project concluded that, "LGBTQ young people are more likely to report mental health concerns, such as depression, anxiety, and suicidality, in comparison to their straight and cisgender peers (Johns et al., 2019; Johns et al., 2020). It is well-documented that receiving LGBTQ identity-related support and acceptance from others may help protect against the development of these mental health concerns, with prior research from The Trevor Project showing that sexual orientation and gender identity acceptance from an adult is related to lower rates of suicide attempts among LGBTQ young people (Green, Price-Feeney, & Dorison, 2021; Price & Green, 2023; The Trevor Project, 2019)."⁸

¹ American Medical Association: <https://www.ama-assn.org/press-center/press-releases/ama-reinforces-opposition-restrictions-transgender-medical-care>

² American Academy of Pediatrics: <https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/142/4/e20182162/37381/Ensuring-Comprehensive-Care-and-Support-for>

³ American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry: https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Latest_News/AACAP_Statement_Responding_to_Efforts_to_ban_Evidence-Based_Care_for_Transgender_and_Gender_Diverse.aspx

⁴ American Psychological Association: <https://www.apa.org/topics/lgbtq/division-54-statement-gender-affirmative-care.pdf>

⁵ American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists: <https://www.acog.org/-/media/project/acog/acogorg/files/advocacy/policy-priorities/trans-care-adolescents-issue-brief.pdf>

⁶ World Professional Association for Transgender Health: <https://www.wpath.org/publications/soc>

⁷ Journal of the American Medical Association: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2789423>

⁸ The Trevor Project. (2023). Acceptance from adults is associated with lower rates of suicide attempts among LGBTQ young people: <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/research-briefs/acceptance-from-adults-is-associated-with-lower-rates-of-suicide-attempts-among-lgbtq-young-people-sep-2023/>

Individualized care plans: Gender affirming health care is deliberate, thoughtful and highly individualized and requires a diagnosis of gender dysphoria, a DSM-5 diagnosis that is defined by the American Psychiatric Association as “psychological distress that results from an incongruence between one’s sex assigned at birth and one’s gender identity.” An individual’s journey to seek the care that is right for such patient who is under the age of 18 requires parental or guardian consent before treatment can begin. It is a journey that requires informed and thoughtful deliberation at each step in the process. Individualized treatment plans are developed through collaborative discussions among patients, their families and medical professionals.

For patients who request care and support around gender development and identity, teams provide ongoing care to support the child and family’s well-being throughout their individual course of care. The most common care plans include ongoing psychological, emotional or social support. A pediatric health psychologist will meet with the family to gather health information related to their mental health and gender identity development. The psychologist may also discuss family, school and social life. Health care providers may ask to communicate with the patient’s existing therapist or help connect the patient with one.

For some patients, a plan of care could include a number of therapy sessions and consideration of family and community support with a patient’s choice to socially transition with changes to outward appearance like clothing and hairstyle. Some patients may choose, in consultation with their care team and consent of parents/guardians, to proceed with pausing puberty by taking a puberty delaying medication. Puberty delaying medications are used for a short period of time and are known to reduce the risk of suicide and depression in this population. The effects are largely reversible. One next step could be deciding not to proceed with any further medical intervention and allowing the return of the onset of puberty. Another step may include eventually proceeding to hormone therapies which help align the body with the patient’s gender identity. For a very small number of patients, proceeding with a surgical intervention to better match their gender identity may be their next step. Surgical interventions do not include any genital surgeries for minors. Every patient is unique so the care each patient receives is tailored to that individual.

Consent: For patients under 18, gender affirming care can only proceed with parent/guardian consent. During the process of obtaining consent, patients, parents or legal guardians are informed of the potential risks and benefits of the proposed treatment and reasonable alternative therapies so they can weigh them and decide with the patient whether to pursue treatment.

Lastly, what is happening in several European countries with respect to gender affirming care has been raised. No European country has banned access to gender affirming health care for minors. Like most of the European providers we also follow an individual centered and holistic approach to care whereby no patients are being prescribed puberty delaying drugs or hormone therapies as a first-line treatment.

Together, we urge you to oppose this legislation that would restrict access to gender affirming care that is safe, effective and medically necessary and to allow patients and families to continue making these important health care decisions for themselves.



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 7882 • MADISON, WI 53707-7882

To: Senate Committee on Health

From: Senator Mark Spreitzer, Senator Tim Carpenter, Representative Greta Neubauer, Representative Lee Snodgrass, Representative Marisabel Cabrera

RE: Senate Bill 480

Date: October 12, 2023

Chair Cabral-Guevara and committee members:

As the members of the Wisconsin Legislative LGBTQ+ Caucus, we are submitting written testimony today in opposition to Senate Bill 480. We ask that our testimony be shared with all members of the committee, and be entered into the committee record for this bill.

Gender-affirming care includes a range of services for nonbinary and transgender people, including puberty blockers, gender-affirming hormones, and surgery. Gender-affirming care reduces gender dysphoria – the clinically-significant psychological distress that results when one’s gender identity does not match their sex assigned at birth – and helps people live healthy and authentic lives.

Every major medical organization – including the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Counseling Association, the American Nurses Association, the Endocrine Society, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the National Association of Social Workers, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association, and the World Medical Association – attests that gender-affirming care is safe, medically necessary, and saves lives.

Legislators should not interfere in private decisions that belong in the hands of patients, their doctors, and their family. This bill would prevent doctors from providing life-saving, medically necessary care to their patients in Wisconsin by banning gender-affirming medical care, including medications to delay puberty, for transgender and nonbinary Wisconsinites under the age of 18. The bill would even permanently revoke the licenses of doctors who refer their patients to receive medically necessary care outside of Wisconsin.

Senate Bill 480 would put the physical and mental health of transgender and nonbinary youth in Wisconsin at risk. Medical studies have shown that receiving gender-affirming care leads transgender and nonbinary people to experience significantly lower rates of depression and suicidality, both over the short-term and over their lifetimes. Youth that received puberty blockers and hormone therapy had 60% lower odds of moderate or severe depression and 73% lower odds of suicidality, according to a recent study published in JAMA Network Open. It is cruel to force transgender youth who have already medically transitioned to discontinue gender-affirming hormones and go through a puberty that is contrary to their gender identity. This bill harms transgender and nonbinary youth by removing their



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 7882 • MADISON, WI 53707-7882

access to critical healthcare that is backed by decades of research and supported by every major medical association representing over 1.3 million doctors in the United States.

Although this bill will not become law in our state, its introduction alone is harmful. Recent national surveys have shown that 86% of transgender and nonbinary youth reported negative impacts to their health from the introduction of anti-transgender bills, with nearly 1 in 3 LGBTQ+ young people stating that their mental health was poor “always” or “most of the time” due to anti-LGBTQ+ policies and legislation.

This bill is deeply harmful and dangerous. Choosing to hold an executive session via paper ballot on this bill less than 24 hours after the public hearing demonstrates a blatant disregard for the important testimony that you are hearing today from those who would be hurt if this bill were to become law. It takes courage and resilience for young people to continue to testify in defense of their own existence – and your choice to rush the executive session is disrespectful and proves that you are not truly interested in the perspectives of the Wisconsinites here to testify today.

We call on you to cancel tomorrow’s scheduled committee vote on SB 480. If this bill does come before you for a vote in this committee or on the Senate floor, we ask that you vote no. We hope that you will join us in telling transgender and nonbinary youth in our state that they are seen, are loved, and that they belong here in Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

Mark Spreitzer
State Senator
15th Senate District

Tim Carpenter
State Senator
3rd Senate District

Greta Neubauer
State Representative
66th Assembly District

Lee Snodgrass
State Representative
57th Assembly District

Marisabel Cabrera
State Representative
9th Assembly District

To the Wisconsin Senate Health Committee:

My name is Robyn Schultz. I live in the City of Milwaukee, where an important element of my life involves serving as President of the Southeast Wisconsin chapter of Pride at Work, the AFL-CIO's LGBTQ+ constituent group. It is partly in that capacity that I would like to testify today on the matter of Senate Bill 480, a bill that I strongly oppose.

I have been living a transgender experience for my entire life. It was only much later in life that I was able to come to terms with this and come out as the person I am. Looking back, there were so many indications that I was not actually the boy I was identified and raised as. Looking back, it seems clear that I would have benefitted from being able to access appropriate counseling and quite probably, suitable support through medical channels. Looking back, I can hardly believe that I am here to talk about this today.

In the conservative religious background I come from, there was no means to establish a vocabulary that I could put into any kind of context or framework to have the critical conversations that would have spared myself and many close to me countless hours of anguish and pain. As I came to terms with my situation, I found myself in a very different position than the young people that stand to be impacted by this bill.

I am a member of a Union, one that has clearly and proudly asserted support for people like me in and out of the workplace. I am currently serving my third term as an officer in my Local of this Union and have the honor of holding the highest office a transgender person has been elected and reelected to in the nearly 150 year history of my Union. I have a career, not a crummy job. I have an education. I have health insurance, savings and a pension. I have a supportive wife and family. I have an incredible team of health care practitioners.

With all of these advantages and privileges, gender affirming care continues to be a challenge. I have spent thousands of hours and thousands of dollars moving forward with what has proven to be the absolute best set of actions I have ever taken. None of this happens without many challenges, barriers and gatekeepers. These exist in the workplace and elsewhere in our communities, in the interactions with health care providers, and in the constant challenges that present in the always amazing arena of health insurance. Many of these challenges could have been avoided, or at least have been less daunting, had I been given an opportunity and the means to access suitable care earlier in my life.

The standards that have been established for care of gender dysphoria are rigorous and have been refined over the course of nearly a century. Looking at the allegations thrown about

in defense of prohibiting young people from having access to the care being attacked by this bill, I feel a need to point out that none of this gender affirming care happens without consent of the family, and that it takes place in concert with the family's medical team. It's important to remind this committee that in order for minors to get piercings or tattoos in Wisconsin, parental consent is required. The narratives about hasty decisions and irreversible medical procedures being anything like the norm are patently false. These stories have no place in any serious discussions about the rights of families to seek qualified support to address the needs of their own.

Perhaps this issue comes down to questions about parental rights or bodily autonomy. Perhaps this comes down to whether we want to allow young people to experience the best lives we can hope for and are willing to work together to build with them. Perhaps this comes down to deciding whether scoring political points and removing the means to demonstrably address the challenges of gender dysphoria to function in a carefully regulated framework is preferable to watching our young people suffer. Perhaps it ultimately comes down to choosing whether it's more important to allow people to be and become who they are, or if we want to lose them to the many avenues of destructive behaviours that present as the best options when they are compelled to live lies. It seems like these should be clear and easy choices.

I challenge you to accept the reality and gravity of your choice on this bill, and the potential impacts this bill stands to have on countless young people in the near and distant future. I must insist that you recognize the consequences of this absurd overreach by the people who claim to be the champions of less government and parental rights. I ask that you discontinue these efforts to dismantle an essential mechanism of support for a small percentage of the young people in our State, each and every one of which has enormous potential, and is worthy of love, respect and a future. This ill-conceived assault on what has a proven track record of helping countless young people to survive an unimaginably difficult set of challenges must end before it goes any further. I submit this statement to assert my place on the right side of history, and to ask that you commit to doing the same.

Thank you all for your time and your willingness to accept this testimony.

Respectfully,

Robyn Schultz

Submitted on 12 October, 2023

Good morning, Members of the Senate Committee on Health, Senator Cabral-Guevera, Senator Testin, Senator Felzkowski, Senator Jacque, Senator Hesselbein, and Senator Carpenter.

My name is Angela Beach. I am a family nurse practitioner based out of Oshkosh, Wisconsin. I live and vote in Appleton, Wisconsin. I have lived and voted in the Fox Valley for 12 years, and am a lifelong Wisconsinite. As a member of this community, I urge you to vote NO on Senate bills 479 and 480.

I deeply care about this issue because gender affirming care is an area of medicine that I am particularly passionate about. I care fiercely for my patients and want the best for them.

I have been practicing gender-affirming medical care for 5 and a half years.

In that time, I have seen a lot of patients of a variety of ages. All are different in their needs, wants, and desires. All have different goals, both for their medical care and their lives in general. The universal truth is that they want to live their lives in their affirmed identities in relative peaceful anonymity. They don't desire special treatment, they simply want to LIVE.

Denying access to gender affirming care will absolutely have negative effects on the physical and mental health of this and future generations of children. These kids are already exponentially more likely to experience suicidality, homelessness, substance abuse, and poor healthcare outcomes than their cisgender counterparts.

Gender affirming care needs to be accessible for everyone, including children. The decision on what healthcare is needed for a particular child, frankly, is not the business of politicians. It also is not my business, unless I am their healthcare provider or parent/guardian. Decisions on what care is appropriate for children should be made by a team of specialized medical providers in tandem with the child and their parents (which is current best practice).

In short, passing these bills will cost lives. At a time where LGBTQ+ youth are struggling with harassment, discrimination, and health disparities as listed above, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin. As stated above, transgender individuals are also at significantly higher risk for suicidality than

cisgender individuals. Restricting their medical care will not improve this.

Passing these bills will negatively impact the well-being of my community members. It is already difficult enough to access medical care. Please do not add unnecessary challenges to transgender individuals and their families.

Passing these bills is likely to cause medical providers like myself, who currently practice in Wisconsin, to leave the state to work and live in areas where we are allowed to practice in alignment with our medical training and professional ethics. This is something my family and I are considering, and I genuinely hope it does not come to this. I love Wisconsin and have lived here for my entire life, but I cannot reside in a state in which politicians can directly limit my scope of practice and cause harm to my patients.

I trust that you share my concern for this community's well-being and will do the right thing representing us when you OPPOSE both Senate Bill 479 and Senate Bill 480 today. You and I both know politicians should never interfere with personal, private medical decisions that should only be made between patients, their doctors, and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration

Angela Beach APNP, FNP-C, RN, MSN

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Angela Beach APNP, NP-C
Family Medicine
Oshkosh, WI 54902

Dear Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Katie Rickert (she/her) and I work for GSAFE, a non-profit in Madison aimed at supporting the well being and educational rights of queer and trans youth. I serve as the Associate Director of Youth Leadership and Advocacy, so you can probably predict that I am writing to oppose SB 479 and SB 480.

To the authors and supporters of this bill: there's a *big* difference between you and I. You sit in your office and write bills that claim to support all children. You sit here, in the State Capitol building and fight a fight that you **believe** is good and moral and worth it.

I, on the other hand, spend my days in schools. With children. And I fight a fight everyday that I **know** is good and moral and worth it.

I'm not sure what you were doing Monday night? Maybe you went out to dinner with your family? Maybe you worked on other legislation? Maybe you kicked your feet up and watched your favorite show? Or maybe you were preparing for today.

On Monday night, I was in a classroom. With queer and trans young people. And maybe your ears were ringing, because they were talking about you. They were talking about your bills.

They were talking about how your bills would deprive them of the care that they need and work so hard to receive. They were talking about how absolutely unjust it is to care about some children, but not all children. More specifically, to care about cisgender children but not transgender children. They wanted to tell you about the dozens of hoops they had to jump through to get the care they needed, the diagnoses they needed, the medications they needed. They wanted to tell you that 8 year olds and 13 year olds aren't making rash decisions about their health. They need doctors, therapists, psychologists, psychiatrists, endocrinologists, coaches, teachers... so many people to be a part of the conversation and the decisions they are making.

When the students read articles and watched clips of what was being said about them and their community last week, they were flabbergasted. They were angry. They were hurt. They were scared. On behalf of these students, and the students we work with around the state, your bills are helping no one.

Your desire for power control is so thinly veiled as a desire for "equality."

I'm here to tell you that one person's happiness does not rob you of your own.

One person's existence does not threaten yours.

One person's medical decisions that they make with their family and their doctor, does not affect you. It does not take anything from you or anyone *you* love.

I can think of dozens of other people around our state who would love for you to use the power and position you have to pass legislation that actually makes a positive impact. Please find a better use of your time and let kids be kids.

Sincerely,

Katie Rickert

Madison, WI 53716

SB 480

Megin McDonell
Executive Director, Fair Wisconsin
122 E. Olin Ave. Ste. 100
Madison, WI 53713

To All Members of the Senate Health Committee, Clerk and Staff,

Good afternoon. My name is Megin McDonell, I am the Executive Director of Fair Wisconsin – Wisconsin’s only statewide LGBTQ+ civil rights and political advocacy organization – and I am also the parent of a transgender child.

I am speaking today in fierce opposition to Senate Bill 480. This bill functions as a total ban on gender-affirming care for minors in Wisconsin, and would deny life-saving care to transgender and non-binary youth in our state. It will cost lives.

And I would like to be clear: this bill is part of a coordinated national political war on the transgender community, designed to distract and divide the general public and eradicate the gains in social acceptance and lived equality that the LGBTQ+ community has fought so hard for over the last 50+ years since Stonewall.

These anti-LGBTQ+ legislative attacks come at an exceedingly dangerous time. Attacks on the transgender and nonbinary community are increasing, with more than 550+ anti-LGBTQ+ bills introduced across the country in the past year. More than 450 of them are explicitly anti-transgender, and of those, at least 130 seek to restrict access to critical, life-saving health care.

The Trevor Project 2023 Youth Mental Health Survey found that nearly 1 in 3 LGBTQ+ young people said their mental health was poor “most of the time or always,” due to anti-LGBTQ+ policies and legislation. The Trevor

Project's 2022 Youth Mental Health Survey found that more than 56% of trans and non-binary youth in Wisconsin have seriously considered suicide in the past year, while more than 21% of them have attempted it.

More than 74% of LGBTQ+ youth in Wisconsin have experienced discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, and more than 35% of LGBTQ+ youth in our state have been threatened or harmed because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. This bill causes real harm to real people, whether or not it is eventually enacted.

At its core, this is an extreme example of politicians once again inserting themselves into private healthcare decisions between doctors, patients, and their families. Politicians should not be interfering with personal medical decisions, let alone deciding the best course of action taken by parents and doctors to support the wellbeing of LGBTQ+ youth.

Every major medical organization, including the American Medical Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics, agrees that gender-affirming care is safe, beneficial, and appropriate for transgender and gender non-conforming youth. Patients of all ages, alongside their families and doctors, should be able to make medical decisions without interference from partisan politicians.

If passed, this bill will cost lives. It is nothing short of an attempt to eradicate the transgender community and roll back the gains that have been made in LGBTQ+ social acceptance and lived equality over the past several decades.

But even if it doesn't become law, the mere introduction and consideration of anti-LGBTQ+ measures such as these has been proven to have a direct, detrimental impact on the mental health of LGBTQ+ people – particularly our queer and trans youth. We need to do better.

Our message to lawmakers is simple. Politicians have no business interfering with deeply personal and private medical decisions that should be made between individuals, their families, and their healthcare providers.

Please vote against Senate Bill 480 and stop playing games with the lives of transgender Wisconsinites. Thank you.

Name: Greyson Mize
City: Madison, WI
Zip Code: 53703
Stance on SB 480: Oppose
Representing: Myself

Dear Senator Cabral-Guevara and members of the Senate Committee on Health,

My name is Greyson Mize. I am a Counseling Psychology PhD student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. I believe that it is important for you to hear personal stories, research, and professional medical standards to guide your understanding of the impact this bill will have on Wisconsin residents if made law.

My personal story is very relevant to this bill. I am a transgender man. Not too long ago, I was a transgender kid. I was incredibly fortunate to have parents who loved and accepted me for who I am. Before the age of 18, I was able to start hormone therapy at 16 and receive gender-affirming chest surgery at 17. These were not decisions that I, my family, and the medical and psychological professionals we consulted with made lightly. I have never regretted having access to this care. I felt more confident. My mental health improved. My grades improved. I felt like I could finally show up in the world as myself. I was not coerced into this care. My parents were not coerced into approving this care. I am not a victim. My life is not a tragedy or a horror story. It is rather the opposite- I am healthy, happy, and pursuing graduate training in a field I am passionate about. I will repeat this again: I have never regretted accessing these interventions before I was 18. **I am grateful every day that I had access to gender-affirming care as an adolescent.**

A 2022 study by Olson et al. of 317 youth who initially identified as transgender found that **97.5% of youth** still identified as transgender or identified as non-binary after a five-year follow-up.

A 2021 study of nearly 8,000 patients by Bustos et al. found that the rate of regret for gender-affirming surgery is between **less than 1% and 2%** when following up with patients (including adolescents) between ~1 and 9 years after surgery. That is extremely low. The main factors predicting regret were psychosocial factors including experiencing stigma and discrimination in society and personal relationships.

So, what is the harm in having youth wait until they turn 18 to access gender-affirming care? There is research on this. A 2022 study of 21,598 participants by Turban et al. found that transgender people who were able to access gender-affirming hormone therapy during ages 14-17 had fewer thoughts of suicide, were less likely to experience major mental health disorders, and had fewer problems with substance abuse compared to people who accessed gender-affirming hormone therapy during adulthood. **Starting gender-affirming hormone treatment in adolescence is linked to better mental health compared to waiting until adulthood.**

Over 30 leading professional medical associations have issued statements supporting gender-affirming health care for transgender people and youth:

- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
- American Academy of Dermatology
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Academy of Physician Assistants
- American Medical Association
- American Nurses Association
- American Association of Clinical Endocrinology
- American Association of Geriatric Psychiatry
- American College Health Association
- American College of Nurse-Midwives
- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
- American College of Physicians
- American Counseling Association
- American Heart Association
- American Medical Student Association
- American Psychiatric Association
- American Society of Plastic Surgeons
- American Society for Reproductive Medicine
- American Urological Association
- Endocrine Society
- Federation of Pediatric Organizations
- GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality
- The Journal of the American Medical Association
- National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
- National Association of Social Workers
- Pediatric Endocrine Society
- Texas Medical Association
- Texas Pediatric Society
- United States Professional Association for Transgender Health (USPATH)
- World Health Organization (WHO)
- World Medical Association
- World Professional Association for Transgender Health

It is your responsibility as Senators to act in the best interests of the people of Wisconsin. My story, the research on gender-affirming care, and the guidance of over 30 leading professional medical associations do not align with the narrative proposed by this bill. I am asking you to listen to the testimony you hear today and base your votes on the expertise and experience of medical and mental healthcare professionals and the people this bill will directly affect: transgender youth and their families. For these reasons, I urge you to oppose SB 480.

References

Bustos, V. P., Bustos, S. S., Mascaro, A., Del Corral, G., Forte, A. J., Ciudad, P., Kim, E. A., Langstein, H. N., & Manrique, O. J. (2021). Regret after Gender-affirmation Surgery: A

Systematic Review and Meta-analysis of Prevalence. *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery. Global Open*, 9(3), e3477.

GLAAD. (2023, June 21). Medical association statements in support of health care for transgender people and youth.

Olson, K. R., Durwood, L., Horton, R., Gallagher, N. M., & Devor, A. (2022). Gender Identity 5 Years After Social Transition. *Pediatrics*, 150(2), e2021056082.

Turban, J. L., King, D., Kobe, J., Reisner, S. L., & Keuroghlian, A. S. (2022). Access to gender-affirming hormones during adolescence and mental health outcomes among transgender adults. *PLOS ONE*, 17(1), e0261039.

Statement of Economic Interests

Filed in 2022 for calendar year 2021

Official Name: Sheild, Peter

Agency or Office: Dentistry Examining Board

Position Title: Member-Dentist Member

- If you were appointed or nominated to a new position or a new term of office since 12/31 of the previous year, this section should be current as of your start date.
- If you are a continuing official, this section should be current as of 12/31 of the previous year.
- If you are leaving office, this section should be current as of your end date.
- If you are a candidate, this section should be current as of 12/31 of the year before your election. (Forms may not be filed before 12/1 of the year before your election.)

The information sought in this form is required by Wis. Stat. §§ 19.43 and 19.44, or Supreme Court Rule 60.05. Failure to file a completed form may result in a forfeiture of up to \$500. Statements of Economic Interests are open for public inspection. The Wisconsin Ethics Commission will notify you of the identity of any person who examines your Statement. In accordance with Wis. Stat. § 15.04(1)(m), the Wisconsin Ethics Commission states that no personally identifiable information is likely to be used for purposes other than those for which it is collected.

Definitions:

- *"Family"* or *"family member"* means your spouse, and any child, stepchild, parent, or parent-in-law who receives more than one-half of his or her support from you or from whom you receive more than one-half of your support.
- *"Income"* means gross income before deductions and depreciation, from whatever source derived, as defined by the Internal Revenue Code, but excludes dividends and interest.
- A *"lobbyist"* is an individual who attempts to influence legislation or administrative rules in Wisconsin by communicating with an elected state official, agency official, or legislative employee on another's behalf for pay. For a list of current lobbyists, go to: <https://lobbying.wi.gov/Who/Lobbyists/2017REG/SearchNames>.

If you need further assistance, please contact Ethics Commission Staff at 608-266-8123 or ethics@wi.gov.

Information current as of December 31, 2021

1A: WISCONSIN DEFERRED COMPENSATION PROGRAM INVESTMENTS

a) Funds Available in Wisconsin Deferred Compensation Program. These funds are available to participants in the Wisconsin Deferred Compensation program and many of them are also available for direct purchase, independent of that program. If you held an investment of \$5,000 or more in any of these funds – either directly or through the program – please check the appropriate box. Please report other investments under the next question.

For new officials, information in this section must be current as of the new official's start date or nomination date. For officials who are leaving state service, this section must be current as of the date the official left office. For candidates, or officials filing an annual SEI, the section must be current as of 12/31 of the previous calendar year.

PLEASE NOTE - as of April 17, 2022, the law has changed. SEI filers no longer have to report defined benefit retirement plans, annuities, money market funds, mutual funds, exchange-traded funds, or exchange-traded notes. These options will still be visible on the SEI form until changes can be made, but you do not have to report them.

PROFILE SERIES

Name of Security	None	\$5,000 to \$50,000	More Than \$50,000
Vanguard Retirement 2055	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vanguard Retirement 2045	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vanguard Retirement 2035	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vanguard Retirement 2025	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vanguard Retirement 2015	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vanguard Target Retirement Income	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

INTERNATIONAL

Name of Security	None	\$5,000 to \$50,000	More Than \$50,000
American Euro Pacific Growth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
BlackRock EAFE Equity Index	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SMALL CAP

Name of Security	None	\$5,000 to \$50,000	More Than \$50,000
BlackRock Russell 2000 Index	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
DFA US Micro Cap Portfolio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

MID CAP

Name of Security	None	\$5,000 to \$50,000	More Than \$50,000
BlackRock Mid Cap Equity Index	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
T Rowe Price Mid Cap Growth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

LARGE CAP AND BALANCED FUNDS

Name of Security	None	\$5,000 to \$50,000	More Than \$50,000
American Beacon Bridgeway	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Calvert US Large Cap	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fidelity Contrafund	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vanguard Institutional Index Plus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vanguard Wellington - Admiral Shares	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

BOND

Name of Security	None	\$5,000 to \$50,000	More Than \$50,000
BlackRock US Debt Index	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dodge & Cox Income	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Federated US Government Securities 2-5yrs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vanguard Long-term Investment Grade Adm Shares	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

MONEY MARKET

Name of Security	None	\$5,000 to \$50,000	More Than \$50,000
Vanguard Admiral Treasury Money Market	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

FIXED RETURNS FOR THE QUARTER

Name of Security	None	\$5,000 to \$50,000	More Than \$50,000
Stable Value	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
FDIC Bank Option	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

BROKERAGE FUNDS

Name of Security	None	\$5,000 to \$50,000	More Than \$50,000
Schwab PCRA	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

1B: OTHER INVESTMENTS

b) Other Investments. List mutual and money market funds, stocks, bonds, limited partnerships, and Wisconsin governmental securities in which you and your family's interest was valued at \$5,000 or more. Please list securities by name (e.g., Fidelity S&P Index 500 Fund, or ABC Corporation). Do not just list the type of account or the institution through which the investments are held (e.g., IRA, Merrill Lynch account, etc.).

Include: stocks and stock options, commodity futures contracts, bonds, limited partnerships, securities issued by the State of Wisconsin or by local government entities within Wisconsin, mutual funds, and money market funds (include any of the aforementioned investments held directly, or through a deferred compensation plan, profit-sharing plan, or pension plan whose investments you or your family directs; in an individual retirement account (IRA); in a trust you or a family member created or of which you or a family member have beneficial use; or held for you by a corporation, partnership, or other entity which you or a family member controls).

DO NOT include: the Wisconsin retirement system, savings accounts, checking accounts, certificates of deposit, annuities, insurance contracts, securities issued by the federal government or a government outside Wisconsin, securities issued by an organization that does not do any business in Wisconsin, investments held by you or your family whose total interest is valued less than \$5,000.

For new officials, information in this section must be current as of the new official's start date or nomination date. For officials who are leaving state service, this section must be current as of the date the official left office. For candidates, or officials filing an annual SEI, the section must be current as of 12/31 of the previous calendar year.

PLEASE NOTE - as of April 17, 2022, the law has changed. SEI filers no longer have to report defined benefit retirement plans, annuities, money market funds, mutual funds, exchange-traded funds, or exchange-traded notes. These options will still be visible on the SEI form until changes can be made, but you do not have to report them.

WISCONSIN GOVERNMENTAL SECURITY

Name of Security	None	\$5,000 to \$50,000	More Than \$50,000
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STOCK

Name of Security	None	\$5,000 to \$50,000	More Than \$50,000
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VJG	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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MUTUAL FUND OR MONEY MARKET FUND

Name of Security	None	\$5,000 to \$50,000	More Than \$50,000
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AMG Yackman Fund - Class I	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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champlain midcap fund	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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first bank financial center	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Ishares Core Dividend Growth ETF	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Parnassus Core Equity Investor CIL	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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pimco investment grade credit bond fund	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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TD Ameritrade Money Market	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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LIMITED PARTNERSHIP

Name of Security	None	\$5,000 to \$50,000	More Than \$50,000
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BOND

Name of Security	None	\$5,000 to \$50,000	More Than \$50,000
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2: BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

List businesses, farms, rental, commercial, and income-producing real estate; and business activities in which you or your family had at least a 10% or greater interest.

a) Enterprises operating under a business or trade name:

List the name of each business; farm; and rental, commercial and income-producing real estate that operated under a business name.

For new officials, information in this section must be current as of the new official's start date or nomination date. For officials who are leaving state service, this section must be current as of the date the official left office. For candidates, or officials filing an annual SEI, the section must be current as of 12/31 of the previous calendar year.

#	Name of Business	Nature of Business	City	County	State
1	none-	na	na	na	na

List businesses, farms, rental, commercial, and income-producing real estate; and business activities in which you or your family had at least a 10% or greater interest.

b) Enterprises not operating under a business or trade name: If no business or trade name, list the address or fire number where the enterprise is located.

- If you or a family member owned rental or other income-producing real estate, but did not operate under a business name, list the street address or fire number, municipality or town, county, and state of the real estate, and describe the nature of the business.
- If you or a family member was self-employed, but did not operate under a business name, list the street address or fire number, municipality or town, county, and state of the real estate, and describe the nature of the business.

For new officials, information in this section must be current as of the new official's start date or nomination date. For officials who are leaving state service, this section must be current as of the date the official left office. For candidates, or officials filing an annual SEI, the section must be current as of 12/31 of the previous calendar year.

#	Name of Business	Nature of Business	City	County	State
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3: BUSINESS PARTNERS

Business Partners. For each enterprise reported under question 2, list its co-owners, partners, officers, and directors (other than yourself), unless the information is already registered with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions.

If you need to edit the name of the business, make changes in question 2.

List separately for each business the names and locations:

- for a general partnership, its partners
- for a corporation not registered to do business in Wisconsin, its officers and directors
- for a limited partnership not registered to do business in Wisconsin, its general partners

Do not list:

- information for a limited partnership created or registered in Wisconsin
- information for a corporation created or registered in Wisconsin

For new officials, information in this section must be current as of the new official's start date or nomination date. For officials who are leaving state service, this section must be current as of the date

the official left office. For candidates, or officials filing an annual SEI, the section must be current as of 12/31 of the previous calendar year.

#	Name of Business	Partners, or Officers and Directors	City	State
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4: COMMERCIAL CUSTOMERS, CLIENTS, AND TENANTS

Commercial Customers, Clients, and Tenants. For each unincorporated business, subchapter S corporation, service corporation (SC), limited liability company (LLC), partnership, or income-producing real estate reported in question 2 from which the filer or a member of the filer's immediate family received \$10,000 or more in the previous calendar year, list businesses, organizations, and lobbyists that paid the enterprise \$10,000 or more in the previous calendar year.

Please also indicate if an organization listed authorized you to represent it in its dealings with others as an attorney-at-law, agent, spokesperson, or representative.

List: both a third-party payer as well as the customer, client, or tenant if the business received income from a third-party payer (such as a fee, commission, or insurance payment received by a realtor, travel agent, or medical practice)

Do not list: an individual (unless the individual was a lobbyist or acting on behalf of a business or organization), or a decedent's estate

Information in the section must cover the entire previous calendar year.

#	Name of Customer	City	State	Spokesperson
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5: NON-COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

Non-Commercial Real Estate. List the specific location of Wisconsin real estate in which you or your family had an interest (except your principal residence and real estate already listed in question 2).

List: real estate you or your family owned directly or through a partnership, corporation, trust or other enterprise.

Do not list: your principal residence unless it was used to conduct business or for rental purposes, or real estate for which you provided the location under question 2.

For new officials, information in this section must be current as of the new official's start date or nomination date. For officials who are leaving state service, this section must be current as of the date the official left office. For candidates, or officials filing an annual SEI, the section must be current as of 12/31 of the previous calendar year.

#	Location of Property	Municipality or town	County	State	Nature of interest
1	14289 Harris Creek Lane	Winchester	Wilas	WI	own

6: OFFICER OR DIRECTOR

Officers and Directors. List organizations of which you or a family member was an officer or director (unless already listed in question 2).

List: each business, labor union, association, cooperative, or other organization of which you or a family member was an officer or director.

Do not list: charitable organizations (entities to which a contribution is tax deductible), political organizations (entities whose primary purpose is to influence voting), non-profit social or community

service organizations, trusts, or federal/state/local governments or governmental agencies.

For new officials, information in this section must be current as of the new official's start date or nomination date. For officials who are leaving state service, this section must be current as of the date the official left office. For candidates, or officials filing an annual SEI, the section must be current as of 12/31 of the previous calendar year.

#	Business or Organization	City	State	Position
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7: AGENT, & REP. SPOKESPERSON

Agent, Representative or Spokesperson. List each organization that authorized you or a family member to represent it in its dealings with others as an attorney-at-law, agent, spokesperson, or representative (unless already listed in question 2, 3, or 6).

List: each business, labor union, association, cooperative, partnership, or other organization for which you or a family member was an authorized representative or legal agent; in the case of a lawyer, business clients for which you or a family member was authorized to provide representation in dealing with other parties or before a tribunal.

Do not list: employers listed in Item 9, businesses you listed in Item 2 as having a 10 percent or greater interest, individuals, charitable organizations (entities to which a contribution is tax deductible), political organizations (entities whose primary purpose is to influence voting), non-profit social or community service organizations, trusts, federal/state/local governments or governmental agencies, and organizations for which your efforts or those of a family member did not include representation to third parties (in the case of a lawyer).

For new officials, information in this section must be current as of the new official's start date or nomination date. For officials who are leaving state service, this section must be current as of the date the official left office. For candidates, or officials filing an annual SEI, the section must be current as of 12/31 of the previous calendar year.

#	Business or Organization	City	State
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8: CREDITOR

Creditors. List creditors to which you or your family owed \$5,000 or more.

Include: each creditor (for personal and business debts) if you or a family member was personally liable for the debt, and your portion of any partnership debts.

For new officials, information in this section must be current as of the new official's start date or nomination date. For officials who are leaving state service, this section must be current as of the date the official left office. For candidates, or officials filing an annual SEI, the section must be current as of 12/31 of the previous calendar year.

#	Creditor	City	State	\$5,000 to \$50,000	More Than \$50,000
1	GM Financial	Fort Worth	TX	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	ixonia Bank	Oconomowoc	WI	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

9: EMPLOYERS

Employers. List your and your family's employers, or other sources of income (\$1,000 or more of income) in the previous calendar year.

List: each employer from which you or a family member received income of \$1,000 or more during the year; the office or department (if a State of Wisconsin employee).

Do not list: an individual (unless the individual was a lobbyist or acting on behalf of an organization).

Information in the section must cover the entire previous calendar year.

#	Name of Business	City	State	Nature of Business
1	ProHealth Care	Waukesha	WI	Registered Nurse

10: ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INCOME

List other sources from which you or your family received income of \$1,000 or more in the previous calendar year.

List: Social Security payments; an entity from which you or your family received retirement benefits; an entity from which you or your family received directors fees; in the case of a fee or commission, both a third-party payer as well as your customer, client, or tenant; an entity that purchased real estate from you or your family; an entity that furnished you or your family honoraria not reported in question 12; any source of income not listed in question 2 or 9

Do not list: the source of dividends or interest; the source of insurance benefits, inheritances, scholarships (if no teaching or services were required in return); the purchaser of securities unless you know the purchaser's identity; an individual (unless the individual was a lobbyist or acting on behalf of a business or organization).

Information in the section must cover the entire previous calendar year.

#	Source of Income	City	State
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11: ENTERTAINMENT AND GIFTS

List individuals and organizations that provided you with entertainment or gifts (more than \$50 in the aggregate) in the previous calendar year.

Do not list: gifts received by family members if they were not intended for you; gifts from your spouse, child, parent, brother, sister, grandchild, grandparent, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, fiancé(e), parent-in-law, grandparent-in-law, brother-in-law, or sister-in-law.

Information in the section must cover the entire previous calendar year.

#	Name of Provider	City	State
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12: HONORARIUM EXPENSES

List, for the previous calendar year, sources of honoraria and payment of expenses related to your state government duties (more than \$50 in the aggregate) not previously reported to the Wisconsin Ethics Commission.

List: each individual or organization from which you received lodging, transportation, meals, expenses,

or honoraria having a total value of more than \$50, for attendance at a conference, presentation of a talk, participation in a meeting, or for a published work about issues initiated by or affecting state government or state agencies.

Do not list: information about lodging, transportation, meals, money or any other thing of pecuniary value: (1) if you returned it within 30 days; (2) if you received it from the agency of which your state public office is a part; (3) if you received it from a source already listed in question 2, 9, or 10; (4) if you already reported the payment to the Wisconsin Ethics Commission as a matter of public record.

Information in the section must cover the entire previous calendar year.

#	Payer	Expenses Value	Honorarium Amount	Circumstances of receipt
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STATEMENT OF SPOUSAL NON-DISCLOSURE ATTACHMENT

Click any documents below to open

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

Click any documents below to open

(You must check this checkbox and click Submit to file your SE.).

I have read the accompanying instructions and certify:

Due Date: 5/2/2022

Certified Date: 1/14/2022

I have read the accompanying instructions and certify that the information contained in this Statement of Economic Interests is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief. In the event this Statement of Economic Interests is filed prior to December 31st for the following calendar year, I certify that I will amend it on or before the statutory filing deadline to accurately reflect my economic interests as of December 31st. If any part has been left blank, I have done so intentionally because there is nothing to report.

The information sought in this form is required by Wis. Stat. §§ 19.43 and 19.44, or Supreme Court Rule 611.05. Failure to file a completed form may result in a forfeiture of up to \$500. Statements of Economic Interests are open for public inspection. The Wisconsin Ethics Commission will notify you of the identity of any person who examines your Statement. In accordance with Wis. Stat. § 15.04(1)(m), the Wisconsin Ethics Commission states that no personally identifiable information is likely to be used for purposes other than those for which it is collected.

If Filing a paper copy please sign and date:

Signature: _____

Date : _____

Billie Jo Higgins

Appointment on the Wisconsin Health and Educational Facilities Authority
Senate Committee on Health Public Hearing | Thursday, October 12, 2023

Good morning,

Thank you for your time today to consider my appointment to continue to serve as a member of WHEFA.

I was born and raised in Oakfield Wisconsin. I am 4 of 5 children. My dad was a small business owner and mom was the head of the household.

I decided when I was in 8th grade, that I wanted to be an accountant. My reasoning for this, I liked math and I liked numbers. I understood the story that numbers could tell. My junior year of High School, I had my first accounting course. I was instantly HOOKED!

I attended UW Oshkosh, where I graduated with a Bachelors of Business Administration in Accounting.

Upon graduation, I worked in public accounting for eight years. I was exposed to areas of manufacturing, real estate, not-for-profits, public K-12 schools, colleges/universities, cities/municipalities. I realized quickly, my passion was in working and helping our not-for-profit and governmental entities. Gaining an understanding of the resources that are available to our communities and how the communities "worked" was fascinating.

In 2008, I had an opportunity with Goodwill Industries in Menasha. They had been an audit client for the previous 4 years. I knew the impact Goodwill had our community and knew it was an opportunity that was right for me!

Then in 2020, at the height of COVID, I joined Evergreen Retirement Community. To watch the organization create a safe and "big" world for our residents and employees was an honor to be part of.

I was first introduced to WHEFA during my time with Goodwill. I learned quickly the impact that WHEFA offered to not-for-profits with interest savings when we were able to reduce our interest rate from 7%+ to under 5%.

Serving as part of the WHEFA board over the last several years has been both an honor and an enjoyable experience. I look forward to continuing to be a part of the great work of WHEFA.

I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Billie Jo Higgins, CPA

W6856 Basswood Lane, Appleton, Wisconsin 54915
920.277.0326 • thehiggins5.wi@gmail.com
www.linkedin.com/in/billie-jo-higgins

CAREER SUMMARY

Results-driven financial executive with 24 years of experience in financial and facilities management of large and progressive nonprofit. Led change to streamline business operations to increase efficiencies and reduce expenses. Strong skills in developing and implementing financial controls and procedures. A solid leader with strong communication and interpersonal skills to work cross functionally with all levels of employees and leaders.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Evergreen Retirement Communities, Inc., Oshkosh, Wisconsin
Vice President – Finance & Information Services

3/2020 - Present

Responsible for strategic financial planning, lead and manage the budgeting process, debt financing, project proformas and oversee all areas of the organization's accounting/financial functions.

- Successfully created and implemented accounts receivable and collections process reducing days in AR from 43 days to 28 days.
- Completed and managed \$9 million tax-exempt financing for new project.
- Successfully led organization through obtaining maximum amount of Provider Relief Funds and timely completion of all mandated filing requirements.
- Developed financial scorecard highlighting the key financial metrics for the organization.

Goodwill Industries North Central Wisconsin, Inc., Menasha, Wisconsin
Vice President of Finance (2012 - Present)

2005 – 3/2020

Responsible for the leadership and coordination of the financial planning, debt financing and coordination of the annual budget to align strategic goals established by the leadership team; establishing adequate policies and procedures for finance and operations to conform with generally accepted accounting principles; and leading four direct and up to 30 indirect reports.

- Successfully managed Request for Proposal (RFP) process to select financial institution partner which refinanced \$20 million in debt reducing interest expense by \$4 million and positioning the organization to be debt free in 10 years.
- Successfully managed RFP process to select financial institution partner to provide treasury management services for organization resulting in annual savings of \$60,000.
- Successfully directed, guided and implemented a paperless accounts payable system which eliminated one Full Time Equivalent.
- Directed the development of the integration of the accounting system and payroll system which facilitated a smoother employee expense reimbursement process.
- Implemented financial planning, reporting and analysis system which enabled the ability to have real time data for forecasting and budgeting.
- Led the Facilities Team comprised of up to 20 team members including providing guidance and oversight to management at 29 buildings.
- Directed the implementation of equipment replacement and building repair schedules which improved facility budget management and long-term costs and reduced potential business downtime.

- Spearheaded an RFP to select a new insurance broker for Property and Casualty Insurance which improved insurance options at a better or reduced cost and negotiated reduced insurer requirements as add-ons to overall coverage.
- Led team through a Business Assessment and SWOT analysis as part of the overall organizational Business Assessment.
- Acted as a calming influence to team members from other departments as they've tried to transition into a brand-new Goodwill culture.

Finance Director (2008 - 2012)

Responsible for the oversight and day to day operations of accounts payable, accounts receivable and payroll; managing and coordinating the annual financial audits, benefit plan audit and 990 tax return preparation; and leading seven direct reports.

Participated on the internal team to review potential vendors, vendor interviews and vendor selection and served as the Project Leader for the Timekeeper Project Team

- Project Leader for two implementation updates of current HRIS system including redesign, reconfiguration, testing and rollout to the organization.
- Managed the redesign of the internal financial statements which created an easier-to-read and standardized format across all areas of the company.
- Managed the annual financial audit process with external auditors. Reduced the time of the audit completion from two (2) weeks to one (1) week.

Financial Analyst (2005 - 2008)

Baker Tilly Virchow Krause LLP, Appleton, Wisconsin

1998 - 2005

Manager

Responsible for managing audits, reviews and taxes of manufacturing and nonprofit clients; and providing oversight and guidance to staff assigned to each project to prioritize completion deadlines and ensuring timely completion of projects.

- Successfully led and managed the completion of three fraud investigations; two of the three resulted in actual fraud having been committed and resolved with criminal charges, and the last investigation resulted in further disciplinary action.

EDUCATION / LICENSES

Certified Public Accountant

1999

University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, Oshkosh, Wisconsin

1998

Bachelors of Business Administration, Accounting

TRAINING / SKILLS

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| • Microsoft Word | • Sage 200 |
| • Microsoft Excel | • Kronos HRIS |
| • Microsoft Outlook | • Adaptive Insights |
| • Microsoft PowerPoint | • Netsmart |
| • Microsoft SharePoint | • Multiview |

AFFILIATIONS

American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), Member

1999 - Present

Wisconsin Institute of Certified Public Accountants (WICPA), Member

1999 - Present

Financial Executives International, Member

2008 - Present

Greater Fox Cities Habitat for Humanity, Finance Committee

2019 - Present

Jennifer Malak
Appointment on the Board of Nursing
Senate Committee on Health Public Hearing | October 12, 2023

I was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on Mother's Day 1980. I grew up in Waukesha, WI with my parents and sister. My mom was a stay-at-home mom, and my dad who worked many long days as installing floors. In 1988 he installed a floor in a school in Milwaukee. They had a number of chalkboards there were getting rid of and he brought one home, my new prized possession. He installed it on the wall in the basement and hung a Wisconsin state map up right next to it so I could have my classroom. I knew I wanted to be a teacher.

In 1993 my parents bought a resort in Northern Wisconsin, and we moved to rural Iron County. Beginning in May with opening fishing through October I spent nearly every Saturday helping my parents and sister clean cabins.

I started nursing school in 2002 and graduated with my associate degree in nursing from Gogebic Community College in Ironwood, MI in 2004. I moved to Madison in 2004, an excited member of the University of Wisconsin Hospital's nurse residency program. I quickly became a charge nurse and a care team leader meaning I was a permanent charge nurse every shift I worked. I started to think about what a career in nursing leadership would look like, though knew I needed to gain more experience before I would feel ready to turn those thoughts into actions.

In 2005 my grandma who had been diagnosed with dementia several years before had a sudden decline. Following a few days in the hospital and labs showing her kidneys were shutting down she was transferred to an inpatient hospice facility in Milwaukee. Walking into facility was much different than what I was accustomed to as a hospital nurse. There weren't bright lights, machines beeping, staff quickly moving from room to room. My grandma looked like she was at peace. I began wondering if I could do this type of work.

I was afforded the opportunity to work with many patients and families in hospice homecare for four years. My husband and I had been trying to expand our family and were plagued with infertility. The specialist thought stress may be playing into this so I opted to transition to working in a clinic part time. Our son joined our daughter, and I finished my bachelor's in nursing during my time at the clinic. Five years into working in the clinic I received a call asking if I would have an interest in coming back to hospice as the manager of the admissions team. Knowing I wanted to explore nursing leadership I jumped at the opportunity.

I have worked as a manager, director, assistant vice president and now as a vice president of homecare operations and customer access. Outside of work I'm a wife, mom to two, and dog mom. I enjoy traveling and (much to my husband's frustration) decorating and updating our home. I am passionate about quality and compliant nursing care. I feel fortunate to be able to combine nursing practice and care, education, and leadership nearly every day. I look forward to serving the residents of Wisconsin on the Board of Nursing.

Jenny Malak

Vice President, Registered Nurse

608.843.8963

Hart_JL@Yahoo.com

Madison, WI

Objective

As a nurse executive, my primary objective is to provide strategic leadership that enables effective and efficient operations, ensure the delivery of quality patient care, and achieves financial targets. I enjoy building goal-driven and engaged teams that are focused on high quality care delivery.

Education

Master of Science in Nursing Leadership • 2019 • University of Wisconsin at Green Bay

Bachelor of Science in Nursing • 2014 • University of Wisconsin at Green Bay

Associate Degree in Nursing • 2004 • Gogebic Community College

Key Skills

Building Relationships
Leadership
Communication

Presentation Skills
Problem-solving
Attention to Detail

Leadership

Highlights

- Consistently exceed staff retention goals (85% retention in 2023)
 - Consistently achieve top-box scores on Employee Engagement Survey
 - In collaboration with the VP, Service Excellence achieved higher than national average quality scores in nearly all quality domains
 - Developed and implemented cardiac specialty care program; achieved a 23% increase in cardiac patient admissions in 18 months
 - Obtained Certification as a Hospice and Palliative Nurse
 - Lead a LEAN project that decreased referral to admission day from 4.0 to 1.7 days leading to over \$1 million in additional revenue over a 12-month time period
-

Experience

Vice President Home-Based Operations • Agrace • 02/2001 – present

Executive leadership role responsible for leading all aspects of home care clinical operations to include geographic expansion, growth within clinical services, and driving quality initiatives. In addition to oversight of hospice homecare, the role also has oversight responsibilities for spiritual and grief services, community grief, hospice nurse practitioners and chronic specialty care programs. Play an active role in building the strategic and annual operating plans, focus on increasing access to services, building relationship with community referral sources, and process improvement opportunities.

Assistant Vice President of Hospice Home Care • Agrace • 12/2019 – 02/2021

Executive leadership role leading home care clinical operations including oversight of 300+ staff members, geographic and hospice census growth. Developed and implemented a new staffing structure which reallocated 5% of staffing budget from managers and providers to direct care staff positions. The restructure resulted in top box quality scores in nearly all domains in the hospice *Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems* survey.

Director of Access • Agrace • 05/2017 – 12/2019

Responsible for directing clinical operations for admissions, enrollment and outreach (sales) teams guaranteeing community access to hospice, palliative care, grief and non-medical home care services as well as ensuring strategic goals are met. Maintain financials through monthly census goals and monitoring of cost center spending. Prepare and monitor department budgets. Collaborate with executives, directors, managers and staff throughout a complex adaptive system ensuring efficient and effective workflows and processes are in place. Manage multiple projects at one time, including development of growth plans, action plans, taskforces, LEAN process improvement, and presentations. Ensure admissions are being offered in a timely manner. Also responsible for mentoring managers, providing strategic planning and evaluating professional & agency growth.

Admission Clinical Team Manager • Agrace • 01/2016 – 05/2017

Responsible for leading a team of twenty nurses. Managed day-to-day department operations. Developed a high level of emotional intelligence and exceeded retention goals for the department with a 93% RN retention after a year of managing the department. Selected to become a LEAN trainee. Coached RNs on hospice eligibility criteria as outlined by National Government Services local coverage determination.

Triage Registered Nurse and Charge RN • SSM Health Care - Dean Clinic • 11/2011 – 12/2015

Triaged patient phone calls, managed My Chart messages, provided lab results and physician recommendations to patients. Assisted department manager with staffing and problem-solving department needs. Co-chaired the clinic's Emergency Response Team and facilitated monthly meetings. Provided coaching to department staff. Developed preceptor checklist and precepted new RN staff.

Registered Nurse Case Manager and Resource RN • Agrace • 11/2007 – 11/2011

Initially served as a Registered Nurse Case Manager (RNCM) working with terminally ill patients. Promoted in 11/2010 to Resource RN continuing to case manage while also providing supervision to six Certified Nursing Assistants and support for the interdisciplinary team members during the time our team leader was unavailable. Actively participated in development and implementation of patient care plans based on individual patient goals and symptoms. Educated patients and family members about the dying process and criteria for remaining eligible for hospice services.

Registered Nurse Clinician and Care Team Leader • University of Wisconsin Hospital • 6/2004 – 11/2007

Began as a Registered Nurse Clinician working on a medical floor serving pulmonary, renal, gastrointestinal, hepatology, general medical and intermediate care unit patients. Supported acute and chronically ill patients during their inpatient stay to manage symptoms and treat diseases/illnesses in a curative nature. Supported patients requiring advanced airway monitoring. Promoted to Team Leader continuing to support direct patient care while also attending staffing rounds, ensuring adequate staffing on the unit and providing support to other clinical and non-clinical unit staff.

Jenny Malak

Vice President, Registered Nurse

Also worked with the float pool which provided care to surgical, trauma and pediatric patients.

Involvement

- National Partnership for Healthcare and Hospice Innovation (NPHI) since 2017
 - ◊ CCO/COO Forum Member 12/2019 – present, co-chair 3/2022 – 4/2023
 - National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) since 2017
 - ◊ Quality & Standards Committee Member 1/2022 – present (2-year term)
 - Wisconsin Nurse's Association since 2021
 - ◊ Elected to Workforce Advocacy Council 1/2023 (2-year appointment)
 - Wisconsin Organization of Nurse Leaders (WONL) since 2022
 - ◊ New Member Committee Member 10/2022 – present
-



SCOTT ALLEN

REPRESENTATIVE • 97TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

12 October 2023

Testimony on SB 480 by Rep. Scott E. Allen

To Chairman Cabral-Guevara and Members of the Committee on Health:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of SB 480, the Help Not Harm Act. This is a health issue that impacts the lives of real people who struggle with gender dysphoria, and we need to make sure that we help and not harm those individuals by prohibiting irreversible and harmful medical gender transition for minors.

I expect today that you will hear from some that this bill flies in the face of accepted medical practice. People will say that the American Medical Association and other groups all consider medical gender transition to be standard care. People will reference generically that there are many “studies” that support this.

I encourage you today to ask them - what studies? I have asked a major medical institution in Wisconsin to do just that. Send me the best studies that justify medical gender transition. I have only received 3, and each of them had small numbers of participants and tracked them no further than 2 years after gender transition. This is insufficient scientific evidence.

On the other hand, you have the US Medicare and Medicaid services that did a meta-analysis of 33 different peer-reviewed studies. In August 2016, they stated that “The majority of studies were non-longitudinal, exploratory type studies...or did not include concurrent controls or testing prior to and after surgery...After careful assessment, we identified six studies that could provide useful information. Of these, the four best designed and conducted studies that assessed quality of life before and after surgery using validated (albeit non-specific) psychometric studies did not demonstrate clinically significant changes or differences in psychometric test results after GRS,” which means Gender Reassignment Surgery.

This was a meta-analysis done under the Obama administration, and they concluded that the best evidence did not show positive changes to support gender transition. The same was decided by researchers in numerous other countries including Sweden, Finland, England, Denmark, Norway, Australia, and New Zealand.

Dr. Rob Garofalo, the Director of Lurie Children’s Hospital’s Gender & Sex Development program in Chicago said, “There are so many unanswered questions around the long-term consequences...and can only be answered with long-term follow-up studies...The stakes are super high, and we don’t have all the answers.”

If we don't have all the answers, why are we allowing doctors to experiment on minors when we know that there are long-term consequences such as bone density loss, sterilization, and heart problems?

It is a complete lie to say that this Help Not Harm bill flies in the face of medical science. You will find along with my testimony, the written testimony of other medical experts and fact sheets with extensive footnotes that direct you to a multitude of peer-reviewed scientific journals. If people say that the science shows that medical gender transition helps minors, ask them for peer-reviewed, long-term clinical evidence. You won't find any.

You might also hear today that this bill is anti-trans. That it is an attack on trans identity and a threat to their very existence. This is simply not true. The bill does not remove an adult's choice to medically transition their gender. Nor does it remove a minor's choice to socially transition. In a democracy we respect the choices of others, and we also recognize that some choices have such long-lasting effects that those choices should only belong to adults.

As a state, we frequently restrict the decision-making of minors when we see the risk of significant harm. We do not allow minors to drink alcohol, smoke, get married, sign contracts, and the list goes on. We do this, because we've always known that minors can make emotional, impulsive decisions.

Now with the development of brain science we know why. The prefrontal cortex is not fully developed until the age of 25, and it is this part of the brain that is responsible for long-term, logical decision making. Youth operate more from the emotional part of the brain.

Youth are more prone to peer pressure and social pressure, and this is something that Dr. Erica Anderson, a trans-woman, and former president of the US Professional Association for Transgender Health is particularly concerned about. She wrote in an article, "In my over 40 years as a psychologist, I've seen psychotherapeutic phenomena come and go. Eating disorders, multiple personality disorders and repressed memory syndrome have in retrospect spread through subgroups of adolescents and the professionals who have treated them. This spread is like wildfire through vulnerable underbrush, clearly borne in an environment of contagion...How is it possible that gender identity formation constitutes the only area of development in adolescence that is immune from peer influence?"

Opponents of this bill want to say that beginning medical transition creates the pause needed for young people to decide, however, puberty suppressants and cross-sex hormones do irreversible damage. The Help Not Harm bill is actually the bill that would create space and time for minors to consider the long-term consequences of gender transition and make an appropriate choice when they become a legal adult.

Now you'll also hear people say that this bill will lead to more kids committing suicide. It is certainly true that young people, as a general age category, struggle more with suicide, and it is also true that those who are struggling with gender dysphoria are even more likely to commit suicide. That is why they need help and not permanent harm.

So a good question is what will lower that suicidal rate? Everyone should care about answering this question and answering it well. The Swedish long study showed that even after gender transition that individuals were still 19 times more likely to commit suicide than the population average. The leading cause of death for participants after medical gender transition was suicide. This suggests that the problem of suicide does not go away after medical transition. In fact, there are no long-term clinical studies that show evidence of lowering suicide.

What does help is talk therapy that helps address other comorbidities often at play in those who struggle with gender dysphoria.

Dr. Kenneth Zucker worked for 30 years at the University of Toronto in the field of gender identity. He determined that the best practice for minors with gender dysphoria was talk therapy to work through family dynamics, trauma and other mental health issues. When doing this, he found that the gender dysphoria usually resolved itself without any harmful medical transitioning.

This is confirmed by other research and the DSM-V (five), the major psychology manual which recognizes that the vast majority of minors will outgrow gender dysphoria if not pushed to transition. The options are not simply transition or suicide.

you may also hear a lot of stories today. Perhaps stories of those who have transitioned and are thankful for it, but we will also hear stories of those who had to de-transition. Stories like Billy Burleigh and Luka Hein that will be included as written testimony. I want to stress again, that this bill does not take away the choice of a legal adult to medically transition. This bill will protect minors from being rushed into a change that they might later regret and yet can't recover from.

Unfortunately, gender transition for minors is a cash cow for pharmaceutical companies, hospitals and medical centers. According to a recent PBS report, the cost of puberty blockers is about \$1,200 a month. Cross-sex hormones are less expensive at about an average of \$102 per month, but they must be taken for life, as in forever. Imagine making a decision for your 14-year-old that would give them a financial burden like that forever.

Drugs that once had no market suddenly have a life-long and growing market. Then there is the money made off of surgeries. When the hospitals come and speak to you about caring for minors, ask them how many kids they are "helping" and ask them how much they charge for a visit, for those meds, for those surgeries. Ask the hospitals if they are doing long-term follow up to ensure that their patients are truly being helped.

In conclusion - if the medical science shows us that medical gender transition does not help, does not reduce the risk of suicide, causes irreversible harm and is experimental at best - who is really helping our kids?

Fact Sheet: Gender Dysphoria and Transgenderism

Gender dysphoria is the experience of “disconnect” between the objective reality of the child’s body and the child’s subjective self-perception that is accompanied by emotional distress.

- Adolescents who think they are transgender have experienced on average five childhood traumas and/or suffered from mental illness prior to developing signs of gender dysphoria.^{1,2}

Prior to the widespread use of transgender interventions, most gender dysphoric youth resolved their dysphoria by young adulthood.

- As many as 88% of gender-dysphoric girls and as many as 98% of gender-dysphoric boys will desist if their biological integrity is affirmed.³
- Visit biologicalintegrity.org or contact us to find pediatricians and therapists that respect biological integrity.

There is evidence that transgender interventions harm adolescents.

- Medical harms of puberty blockers when used for gender dysphoria include emotional distress, new-onset psychiatric illness, reduced bone density, permanent sexual dysfunction and the possibility of permanent sterility (if used in early puberty then combined with or followed by cross-sex hormones).^{4,5}
- Medical harms of cross-sex hormones include cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, heart attack, blood clots, stroke, diabetes, and cancer.⁵
- Transgender surgeries maim healthy tissue and destroy healthy organs.
- Youth affirmed as transgender by their parents had greater anxiety and lower self esteem than their age matched peers.⁶
- There are no long term studies of medical and surgical interventions for gender dysphoria in youth.

¹ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33510668/>. Attachment Patterns in Children and Adolescents with Gender Dysphoria.

² Becerra-Culqui TA, Liu Y, Nash R, et al. Mental Health of Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Youth Compared With Their Peers. *Pediatrics*. 2018;141(5):e20173845.

³ Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-5. 5th ed., American Psychiatric Association, 2013.

⁴ Lupron package insert (https://www.lupronped.com/about-lupron-depot-ped?cid=ppc_ppd_msft_Lupron_Branded_lupronped.com_Phrase_USLUPR220485)

⁵ Laidlaw M, Van Meter QL, Hruz PW, Van Mol A and Malone WJ. *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*, 2019;104(3): 686–687, <https://doi.org/10.1210/je.2018-01925>

⁶ Schumm W and Crawford DW. Is Research on Transgender Children What It Seems? Comments on Recent Research on Transgender Children with High Levels of Parental Support. *Linacre Quarterly*(87;1), February 2020, (pp.9-24). Available at <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/epub/10.1177/0024363919884799>

Biological Integrity *Integrating the Mind and Body*

Adolescents experiencing gender dysphoria are *not* more likely to commit suicide if they do not undergo transgender interventions.

- Three systematic reviews of the world scientific literature found no evidence that puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones reduce the risk of suicide.^{7, 8, 9}
- 22% of gender dysphoric patients attempt suicide — a similar incidence for autistic patients and patients suffering from depression or anxiety.¹⁰
- A long term study of transgender adults who underwent hormones and surgeries revealed a suicide rate 19 times that of the general population.¹¹

Several European nations have reversed course on medical and surgical interventions for gender dysphoric youth due to risk for irreversible harm and low evidence of any benefit.

In the U.S., 23 states have passed legislation to protect minors from harmful transgender interventions.



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⁷ Recommendation of the Council for Choices in Health Care in Finland
https://segm.org/sites/default/files/Finnish_Guidelines_2020_Minors_Unofficial%20Translation.pdf

⁸ The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (N.I.C.E.) Evidence review: Gonadotropin releasing hormone analogues for children and adolescents with gender dysphoria (2020).
<https://arms.nice.org.uk/resources/hub/1070871/attachment>; and N.I.C.E. Evidence review: Gender-affirming hormones for children and adolescents with gender dysphoria (2020).
<https://arms.nice.org.uk/resources/hub/1070905/attachment>

⁹ Ludvigsson JF, Adolfsson J, Hoistad M, Rydelius PA, Kristrom B, Landen M. A systematic review of hormone treatment for children with gender dysphoria and recommendations for research. *Acta Paediatr.* 2023; 112. doi:10.1111/apa.16791. Epub ahead of print.

¹⁰ Herman JL, Wilson BD, Becker T. Demographic and Health Characteristics of Transgender Adults in California: Findings from the 2015-2016 California Health Interview Survey. Policy Brief. UCLA Cent Health Policy Res. 2017 Oct;(8):1-10. <https://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/publications/Documents/PDF/2017/transgender-policybrief-oct2017.pdf>

¹¹ Dhejne C, Lichtenstein P, Boman M, Johansson ALV, Langstrom N, et al. (2011) Long-Term Follow-Up of Transsexual Persons Undergoing Sex Reassignment Surgery: Cohort Study in Sweden. *PLoS ONE* 6(2): e16885. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0016885. Available at <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21364939/>

Top Studies on the Science Against Transgender Interventions

September 2023

Studies that Show Transgender Interventions Harm, not Help

- This 2011 Swedish study of post-sex reassignment surgery adults showed a completed suicide rate 19 times that of the general population 10 year out, along with nearly 3 times the rate of psychiatric inpatient care.
 - Dhejne C, Lichtenstein P, Boman M, Johansson ALV, Langstrom N, et al. (2011) Long-Term Follow-Up of Transsexual Persons Undergoing Sex Reassignment Surgery: Cohort Study in Sweden. *PLoS ONE* 6(2): e16885. [10.1371/journal.pone.0016885](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0016885).
- This 2020 study, claiming to be the first total population study of 9.7 million Swedish residents, showed neither “gender-affirming hormone treatment” nor “gender-affirming surgery” improved the mental health benchmarks.
 - Bränström R, Pachankis JE: Reduction in mental health treatment utilization among transgender individuals after gender-affirming surgeries: a total population study. *Am J Psychiatry* 2020; 177:727–734. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.2019.19010080>
 - Kalin NH: Reassessing mental health treatment utilization reduction in transgender individuals after gender-affirming surgeries: a comment by the editor on the process (letter). *Am J Psychiatry* 2020; 177:765 <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.2020.20060803>
- This 2021 comprehensive data review of all 3,754 trans-identified adolescents in US military families over 8.5 years showed that gender hormone treatment lead to increased use of mental health services and psychiatric medications, and increased suicidal ideation/attempted suicide.
 - Elizabeth Hisle-Gorman, MSW, PhD and others, Mental Healthcare Utilization of Transgender Youth Before and After Affirming Treatment, *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*, Volume 18, Issue 8, August 2021, Pages 1444–1454, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsxm.2021.05.014>

Systematic Review that Ranks WPATH and Endo Society Guidelines as Poor Quality

This 2021 BMJ first of its kind “systematic review and quality assessment” used “to assess all international clinical practice guidelines” rated WPATH’s (World Professional Association for Transgender Health) SOC 7 with a quality score of zero out of six., and the Endocrine Society Guidelines a quality score of one out of six.

Dahlen S, Connolly D, Arif I, *et al* International clinical practice guidelines for gender minority/trans people: systematic review and quality assessment. *BMJ Open* 2021;11:e048943. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2021-048943

Study that Shows Desistance is the Norm for Minors with Gender Dysphoria

Zucker, K. J. (2018). The myth of persistence: response to “A critical commentary on follow-up studies and ‘desistance’ theories about transgender and gender nonconforming children” by Temple Newhook *et al*. *International Journal of Transgenderism*, 19(2), 231–245. Published online May 29, 2018.
<http://doi.org/10.1080/15532739.2018.1468293>

Studies that Show Mental Health Problems Underlie Gender Dysphoria

- This 2018 Kaiser-Permanente study gleaned from electronic medical records of 8.8 million members in Georgia and California showed:
 - High rates of psychiatric disorders and suicidal ideation *before* gender non-congruence in teens.
 - Rates (prevalence ratios/PR) in the 6 months before first findings of GNC compared to gender congruent peers: psych disorders 7 times higher overall, vast PR for certain ones, psych hospitalizations 22-44 times higher, self harm 70-144 times higher, suicidal ideation 25-54 times higher (Tables 3 & 4 of study).
 - Suicidal ideation during said 6 months before GNC findings: 7% in biological males and 5% in biological females. Far below rates claimed by activists, but still high.

Becerra-Culqui TA, Liu Y, Nash R, *et al*. Mental Health of Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Youth Compared with Their Peers. *Pediatrics*. 2018;141(5):e20173845.

- This 2015 report from Finland’s gender identity services found:
 - 75% of adolescents they saw were or had been undergoing psychiatric treatment for reasons other than gender dysphoria.
 - 26% had autism spectrum disorder. 87% female.
 - “Treatment guidelines need to consider gender dysphoria in minors in the context of severe psychopathology and developmental difficulties.”

Kaltiala-Heino R, Sumia M, Työläjäarvi M, Lindberg N. Two years of gender identity service for minors: overrepresentation of natal girls with severe problems in adolescent development. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health* (2015) 9:9.

- This 2021 prospective study from a multidisciplinary pediatric gender service in Australia found:
 - High levels of distress (including GD), suicidal ideation (41.8%), self-harm (16.3%), and suicide attempts (10.1%).
 - High rates of comorbid mental health disorders: anxiety (63.3%), depression (62.0%), behavioral disorders (35.4%), and autism (13.9%).

- o High rates of adverse childhood experiences, with family conflict (65.8%), parental mental illness (63.3%), loss of important figures via separation (59.5%), and bullying (54.4%); and maltreatment (39.2%).
 - o Key challenges faced by the clinicians: polarized discourses; pressures to abandon the holistic [biopsychosocial] model; the difficulties of untangling gender dysphoria from comorbid factors such as anxiety, depression, and sexual abuse.
- Kozłowska K, McClure G, Chudleigh C, et al. Australian children and adolescents with gender dysphoria: Clinical presentations and challenges experienced by a multidisciplinary team and gender service. *Human Systems*. 2021;1(1):70-95.
doi:[10.1177/26344041211010777](https://doi.org/10.1177/26344041211010777)

Studies Demonstrating the Fatal Flaws of the Dutch Protocol

- This 2023 report stated that, “Two Dutch studies formed the foundation and the best available evidence for the practice of youth medical gender transition. We demonstrate that this work is methodologically flawed and should have never been used in medical settings as justification to scale this “innovative clinical practice.””
 - o E. Abbruzzese, Stephen B. Levine & Julia W. Mason (2023): The Myth of “Reliable Research” in Pediatric Gender Medicine: A critical evaluation of the Dutch Studies—and research that has followed, *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, DOI: [10.1080/0092623X.2022.2150346](https://doi.org/10.1080/0092623X.2022.2150346)“
- Michael Biggs (2022) The Dutch Protocol for Juvenile Transsexuals: Origins and Evidence, *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, DOI: [10.1080/0092623X.2022.2121238](https://doi.org/10.1080/0092623X.2022.2121238)

Comprehensive literature reviews finding studies in favor of transgender interventions to be of low to very low quality, leading to these three nations reversing course from pro-transition to strong, deep, and extended emphasis on mental health issues

- Sweden 2023. Ludvigsson, J.F., Adolfsson, J., Höistad, M., Rydelius, P.-A., Kriström, B. and Landén, M. (2023), A systematic review of hormone treatment for children with gender dysphoria and recommendations for research. *Acta Paediatr*. Accepted Author Manuscript. <https://doi.org/10.1111/apa.16791>
- Swedish Agency for Health Technology Assessment and Assessment of Social Services’ 2019 literature review. <https://www.sbu.se/en/publications/sbu-bereder/gender-dysphoria-in-children-and-adolescents-an-inventory-of-the-literature/>
- Finland 2020: “Recommendation of the Council for Choices in Health Care in Finland (PALKO / COHERE Finland). Medical Treatment Methods for Dysphoria Related to Gender Variance In Minors” https://segm.org/sites/default/files/Finnish_Guidelines_2020_Minors_Unofficial%20Translation.pdf
- 2020. UK’s The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) reviews:
 - o N.I.C.E. Evidence review: Gonadotrophin releasing hormone analogues for children and adolescents with gender dysphoria.:

- <https://ia802301.us.archive.org/4/items/gov.uscourts.ared.128159/gov.uscourts.ared.128159.45.9.pdf> or <https://cass.independent-review.uk/nice-evidence-reviews/>
- o N.I.C.E. Evidence review: Gender-affirming hormones for children and adolescents with gender dysphoria.:
<https://cass.independent-review.uk/nice-evidence-reviews/>
 - UK: Cass Review, Interim Report (2022)
<https://cass.independent-review.uk/publications/interim-report/>
 - o This led to the closure of the world's largest pediatric gender clinic, NHS GIDS.



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Fact Sheet: Risks of Puberty Blockers

What is Puberty?

Puberty is a critical time-limited period of healthy physical, cognitive, emotional and social development during which an infertile child becomes a fertile and more mature adolescent.

What Are Puberty Blockers (PBs)?

Puberty blockers are gonadotropin releasing hormone agonists (GnRH) which are generally safe and effective for treating precocious puberty in children, some gynecological conditions including endometriosis in women, and prostate cancer in men. Lupron is the brand name of one commonly prescribed GnRH agonist in the U.S..¹

Is it possible for PBs to be dangerous for stopping normal puberty in gender dysphoric children, but safe to treat precocious puberty, endometriosis and prostate cancer?

Yes. Disrupting normal puberty is objectively harmful because puberty is not a disease. In contrast, precocious puberty, endometriosis and prostate cancer are diseases; they disrupt normal development, function and health. The proper use of medicine restores health, function and normal development. In the context of these diseases, the potential for Lupron to restore and/or improve patient health usually outweighs Lupron's potential negative side effects (which are still disclosed to patients as a matter of informed consent). This is not the case with gender dysphoria.

How is the situation different for children with gender dysphoria?

Children with gender dysphoria are physically healthy. They do not have a disease of the body; they are emotionally and psychologically distressed. Prescribing puberty blockers to these children permanently disrupts their physical, cognitive, emotional and social development. This disruption causes a permanent loss because no one can return the time they have lost in normal pubertal development should they wish to desist; that amount of normal pubertal development – be it several months or several years – is permanently stolen from them. This matters because prior to the routine use of puberty blockers, the vast majority of gender dysphoric youth desisted

¹ <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/body/22525-gonadotropin-releasing-hormone>

and identified with their sex by young adulthood.^{2,3} With the routine use of puberty blockers, the vast majority of gender dysphoric children instead identify as transgender, use dangerous cross-sex hormones, and may even pursue cross-sex surgeries.^{4,5,6,7,8} Blocking normal puberty in these emotionally suffering children robs them of the developmental period during which many might otherwise outgrow their dysphoria and embrace their bodies.

Neuro-psychological Side-effects of puberty blockers:

Lupron's package insert *for use in treating children with precocious puberty* warns of emotional lability, irritability, seizures, brain swelling, headache, blurred vision and loss of vision as potential side effects and recommends *monitoring patients for development of new or worsening psychiatric symptoms.*⁹

After experimental treatment with puberty blockers, the British Medical Journal reports *no psychological benefit to youth with gender dysphoria*. According to Oxford University Professor Michael Biggs, "there was no statistically significant difference in psychosocial functioning between the group given blockers and the group given only psychological support. In addition, there is unpublished evidence that after a year on [puberty blockers] children reported greater self-harm, and the girls also experienced more behavioral and emotional problems and expressed greater dissatisfaction with their body—so puberty blockers exacerbated gender dysphoria."¹⁰

² Kenneth J. Zucker (2018) The myth of persistence: Response to "A critical commentary on follow-up studies and 'desistance' theories about transgender and gender non-conforming children" by Temple Newhook et al. (2018), *International Journal of Transgenderism*, 19:2, 231-245, DOI: [10.1080/15532739.2018.1468293](https://doi.org/10.1080/15532739.2018.1468293)

³ Ristori J, Steensma TD. Gender dysphoria in childhood. *Int Rev Psychiatry*. 2016;28(1):13-20.

⁴ Brik T, Vrouwenraets LJJ, de Vries MC, Hannema SE. Trajectories of adolescents treated with gonadotropin releasing hormone analogues for gender dysphoria [published online ahead of print March 9, 2020]. *Arch Sex Behav*. doi:10.1007/s10508-020-01660-8

⁵ Kuper LE, Stewart S, Preston S, Lau M, Lopez X. Body dissatisfaction and mental health outcomes of youth on gender-affirming hormone therapy. *Pediatrics*. 2020;145(4):e20193006

⁶ Annelou L.C. de Vries, et al., "Puberty suppression in adolescents with gender identity disorder: A prospective follow-up study" *The Journal of Sexual Medicine* 8(8): 2276–2283 (2011).

⁷ Wiepjes CM, Nota NM, de Blok CJM, et al. The Amsterdam cohort of gender dysphoria study (1972-2015): trends in prevalence, treatment, and regrets. *J Sex Med*. 2018;15(4):582–590

⁸ Carmichael P, Butler G, et al. Short-term outcomes of pubertal suppression in a selected cohort of 12 to 15 year old young people with persistent gender dysphoria in the UK. medRxiv 2020.12.01.20241653.

⁹ Lupron Depot Package insert https://www.lupronped.com/about-lupron-depot-ped?cid=ppc_ppd_msft Lupron Branded [lupronped.com](https://www.lupronped.com) Phrase USLUPR220485

¹⁰ <https://www.bmj.com/content/372/bmj.n356.full>

Bone Mass & Height side-effects of puberty blockers:

Up to one third of gender dysphoric patients treated with puberty blockers have a lower bone density than 97.7% of their age matched peers.¹¹ A study aiming to assess development of bone mineral density during GnRHa therapy and subsequent sex reassignment procedures until age 22 showed loss of bone mass; these adolescents do not achieve their optimal height or bone density.¹²

Permanent Sterility and Loss of Capacity for Sexual Fulfillment from Puberty Blockers:

A UCSF publication on fertility options for transgender persons state that “currently it is not possible for children who have not undergone natal puberty (and who may have used gender affirming hormones) to preserve gametes.”¹³ Dr. Marci Bowers, a vaginoplasty surgeon who transitioned when she was 38 has said that “every single child or adolescent who was truly blocked at Tanner Stage 2 [when hormones begin their work of advancing a child to adulthood] has never experienced orgasm. I mean, it’s really about zero.”¹⁴

Side-effects on I.Q. and Cognitive Maturation from Puberty Blockers are Unknown:

Since sex hormones normally secreted during puberty are responsible for the organizational development of the brain, and puberty blockers prevent this normal secretion, it is possible that gender dysphoric youth could be cognitively impaired.¹⁵ Lupron impairs memory in adults taking it to treat gynecological conditions, breast cancer and prostate cancer.¹⁶

¹¹Biggs M. Revisiting the effect of GnRH analogue treatment on bone mineral density in young adolescents with gender dysphoria *Journal of Pediatric Endocrinology and Metabolism*, vol. 34, no. 7, 2021, pp. 937-939.

<https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/jpem-2021-0180/html>

¹²Daniel Klink, Martine Caris, Annemieke Heijboer, Michael van Trotsenburg, Joost Rotteveel, Bone Mass in Young Adulthood Following Gonadotropin-Releasing Hormone Analog Treatment and Cross-Sex Hormone Treatment in Adolescents With Gender Dysphoria, *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*, Volume 100, Issue 2, 1 February 2015, Pages E270–E275.

<https://academic.oup.com/jcem/article/100/2/E270/2814818?login=false> (2015)

¹³ Amato P. “Fertility Options for Transgender Persons.” UCSF Transgender Care. June 17, 2016.

<https://transcare.ucsf.edu/guidelines/fertility>

¹⁴ Shrier A. “Top Trans Doctors Blow Whistle on ‘Sloppy’ Care. In exclusive interviews, two prominent providers sound off on puberty blockers, ‘affirmative’ care, the inhibition of sexual pleasure, and the suppression of dissent in their field.” *The Free Press*. October 4, 2021. <https://www.thefp.com/p/top-trans-doctors-blow-the-whistle?s=r>

¹⁵ Vigil P, et al., “Endocrine Modulation of the Adolescent Brain: A Review” *Journal of Pediatric & Adolescent Gynecology* 24(6):330-337 (December 2011).

¹⁶ Craig MC, Fletcher PC, Daly EM, Rymer J, et al. Gonadotropin hormone releasing hormone agonists alter prefrontal function during verbal encoding in young women. *Psychoneuroendocrinology*. 2007;32(8-10):1116-27.

DOI:10.1016/j.psyneuen.2007.09.009

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Fact Sheet: International Trends in Care for Children with Gender Dysphoria

September 2023

Sweden:

In February 2022, Sweden's National Board of Health and Welfare (NBHW) released updated guidelines for the care of gender dysphoric children, citing increased incidence of detransitioners and young adults with transition-related regret.¹ NBHW noted:

- The risk of hormonal treatments outweigh the benefit in the vast majority of cases.
- Psychological and psychiatric support will become the first line of treatment, especially in cases of autism spectrum disorder.

As of May 2021, Astrid Lindgren Children's Hospital in Stockholm ended prescribing of puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones.²

- Hormonal interventions are prescribed to a minority of patients suffering from prepubertal onset of GD, after extensive psychological evaluation, only within the setting of a clinical trial approved by the Ethical Review Agency/Swedish Institutional Review Board.

Finland:

In June 2020, Finland's Council for Choices for Healthcare (COHERE) issued new guidelines stating that psychotherapy should be the first line of treatment for gender dysphoric youth, noting that a comprehensive review of the evidence showed medical evidence for pediatric transition is inconclusive and medical gender reassignment was not sufficient to improve mental health functioning.³

- Puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones will be reserved almost exclusively for minors with early-childhood onset of GD only, not those with co-morbid mental health conditions, especially not for adolescents who are exploring their personality and identity.
- Surgical treatments are not part of the treatment methods for GD; surgery will not be offered to those under 18 years of age. The guidelines warn against offering irreversible treatments to persons under 25 years of age because of incomplete neurocognitive development.

¹

<https://segm.org/segm-summary-sweden-prioritizes-therapy-curbs-hormones-for-gender-dysphoric-youth>

² https://segm.org/Sweden_ends_use_of_Dutch_protocol

³ https://segm.org/sites/default/files/Finnish_Guidelines_2020_Minors_Unofficial%20Translation.pdf

- Eligibility for hormonal intervention will be offered only in centralized GD research settings.

France:

In March 2022, The National Academy of Medicine in France noted the driving mechanisms creating the phenomena of rapid onset gender dysphoria, blaming excessive engagement with social media, greater social acceptability, and influence within social circles.⁴

- Children desiring transition should receive extended psychological support in a multidisciplinary setting, given the risk of overdiagnosis and increasing incidence of detransitioners.
- Families should receive robust education and informed consent regarding the side effects of puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones and the irreversibility of treatments, especially surgery.
- The report highlighted impacts on bone growth and weakening, risk of sterility, emotional and intellectual consequences as well as the irreversibility of surgeries.
- The Academy urged parents to be vigilant regarding the addictive role of social media which harms the psychological development of children and contributes to the sense of gender incongruence.

United Kingdom:

The Cass report, reviewing the lack of evidence for social transitions, puberty blockers, and cross-sex hormones, was published in October 2022. The Tavistock Gender Identity Service Clinic closed in late 2022. The National Health Service guidelines include:⁵

- Developmentally-appropriate comprehensive psychotherapy by a multidisciplinary team, not simply ‘gender dysphoria specialists,’ to assess the patient for autism, psychiatric conditions (anxiety/depression/self-harm/drug use), endocrine and metabolic disorders.
- Recognition that social transition is not a neutral act and is a form of therapy. NHS strongly advises against social transition of children, only after families and children accept informed consent.
- The NHS will allow puberty blockers only in formal research settings, because of the unknown long-term effects of these medications, and cautions against cross-sex hormones.

⁴<https://www.academie-medecine.fr/la-medecine-face-a-la-transidentite-de-genre-chez-les-enfants-et-les-adolescents/?lang=e>

⁵https://www.engage.england.nhs.uk/specialised-commissioning/gender-dysphoria-services/user_uploads/b1937-ii-specialist-service-for-children-and-young-people-with-gender-dysphoria-1.pdf

- Families who seek puberty blockers and hormones outside the NHS protocols will be strongly cautioned against accessing such treatment.
- Surgical transition is not allowed for minors.

Australia and New Zealand:

The RANZCP (Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists) is the first Psychiatric group to recognize the lack of evidence-based research regarding treatment for gender dysphoria.⁶

- In August 2021 released its first position statement addressing the mental health needs of people with GD, noting “polarised views and mixed evidence regarding treatment options for people presenting with gender identity concerns and a paucity of evidence” regarding treatment.
- Until high quality research based evidence is available regarding endocrine and surgical interventions, exploratory psychotherapy should be the first-line treatment for youth suffering from gender confusion, to explore the full spectrum of mental illness, family history and context in which gender dysphoria has arisen to formulate personalized individual counseling.

Denmark:

In July 2023, the Journal of the Danish Medical Association published a discussion regarding their reticence to proceed with medical transition of gender dysphoric minors, citing increased numbers of gender dysphoric youth with comorbid psychiatric disease, influence of social environments on children, uncertainty regarding side effects of treatments, and growing incidence of detransitioners. While official guidelines have not been created, Denmark offered medical transition treatment to only 6% of patients in 2022 as opposed to 65% of patients in 2018.⁷

Norway:

In March 2023, the Norwegian Healthcare Investigation Board (NHIB/UKOM) declared that evidence for transgender interventions is deficient, and the long-term effects are little known, especially in the teenage population which may be suffering transient gender distress. Youth

⁶<https://www.ranzcp.org/news-policy/policy-and-advocacy/position-statements/gender-dysphoria>

⁷<https://segm.org/Denmark-sharply-restricts-youth-gender-transitions>



gender transition will become the exception, no longer an automatic right when children claim to have gender dysphoria.⁸

International Pushback:

In July 2023, 21 clinicians and researchers from 9 countries questioned Dr. Hammes of The Endocrine Society regarding gender-transition guidelines and lack of scientific evidence to support the guidelines. Read the letter in the Wall Street Journal: [Youth Gender Transition Is Pushed Without Evidence - WSJ](#)



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⁸<https://dailycaller.com/2023/03/10/norway-health-care-system-transgender-gender-affirming-care-evidence-baed/>