

Texas Enacts Landmark Legislation Prohibiting Transgender Care for Minors



Texas Governor Greg Abbott recently signed a bill that prohibits transgender healthcare for minors, effectively banning puberty blockers and hormone therapy in the state. With this move, Texas becomes the largest among 20 states that have outlawed gender-affirming care for transgender youth.

Republican lawmakers nationwide have been pushing for similar bills, expressing their skepticism towards the consensus among major medical associations that advocate for gender-affirming care as crucial and potentially life-saving for transgender youth following an extensive evaluation.

As the second most populous state in the U.S., Texas is estimated to have around 29,800 transgender youth aged 13 to 17, according to the Williams Institute of UCLA. This ban on transgender healthcare has prompted organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to pledge their commitment to challenging the law in court, just as they have done with similar legislation in other states.

In response to the passage of the bill, the ACLU released a statement criticizing Texas lawmakers for endangering the health and lives of transgender youth, despite the overwhelming scientific and medical evidence that supports the necessity of gender-affirming care. The Texas law does include some exceptions, allowing minors who began treatment before June 1 or those who have undergone at least 12 sessions of mental health counseling or psychotherapy for a minimum of six months to continue receiving care. However, even in these cases, patients are required to gradually discontinue their prescription drug use.

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Proponents of such laws argue that government intervention is necessary to protect minors from potential irreparable harm, even if it means overriding the wishes of parents and doctors. On the other hand, influential medical organizations such as the American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics oppose this legislation, highlighting the importance of allowing transgender youth access to appropriate care.

The year 2023 has seen a significant increase in the introduction of bills targeting the LGBTQ community by Republicans, with over 500 bills having been proposed. Of those, more than 50 have been passed, according to the Human Rights Campaign, an LGBTQ rights group. These figures represent a notable rise from the 315 bills introduced and 29 passed in 2022.

The ban on transgender healthcare for minors in Texas has sparked debates and concerns about the well-being and rights of transgender youth. Advocates for gender-affirming care argue that denying access to such treatments can have severe consequences on the mental and physical health of transgender individuals. They emphasize that medical professionals, who are experts in their field, should have the autonomy to provide appropriate care based on individual needs and medical consensus.

Opponents of gender-affirming care often rely on personal beliefs, moral values, or misconceptions about transgender individuals. However, it is important to recognize that medical associations and experts have extensively studied and researched the benefits of gender-affirming care. They consistently affirm that this care is essential for the well-being and healthy development of transgender youth.

The battle over transgender healthcare for minors continues to unfold in various states, including Texas, where legal challenges are expected. The outcome of these legal battles will not only impact the lives of transgender youth in Texas but also set precedents and potentially influence legislation in other parts of the country. The fight for the rights and well-being of transgender youth remains a crucial issue, and it will require ongoing advocacy and education to ensure that they receive the care they need and deserve.