



## DOCTORS FOR CHANGE

April 12, 2021

Dear Chairman Hughes,

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We are writing on behalf of Doctors for Change and its more than 1,000 healthcare provider members from across Texas to vehemently oppose SB 1646. We care for Texans of all ages, including transgender and non-binary children, youth, and adults and we are appalled by the blatant intention of SB 1646 to characterize the provision of our compassionate, evidenced-based care as “child abuse” and to levy criminal penalties against providers who are putting the health and well-being of patients first, as is our duty to do, as well as parents/guardians who are properly ensuring their children receive necessary care. If enacted, SB 1646 would place yet another obstacle in the path to accessing affirming, culturally-competent medical care for transgender and non-binary children and youth. We cannot let this happen in Texas

All Texans, including transgender and non-binary children and youth, deserve the right to healthy lives, which includes both psychological and physical wellbeing. This can include receiving medical care to delay and alleviate the rapid worsening of gender dysphoria that occurs with puberty and the irreversible development of secondary sex characteristics, giving providers and patients the necessary time to determine the best course forward. The care provided to children and youth with gender dysphoria is tailored to their specific needs by a team of highly trained providers, including pediatricians, mental health specialists, endocrinologists, surgeons, and allies and supporters including parents and guardians. Each provider plays a role in ensuring the health of the child based on established standards of care and the peer-reviewed medical literature. Particularly harmful is the collateral result of SB 1646 that would mandate any health care provider report minors receiving certain care which would irreparably damage the trust and confidentiality of patient-provider relationships.

In our experience, affirmation and acceptance from parents, guardians, physicians and all other important adults in a child’s life is extremely beneficial to the child’s health outcomes and happiness. These benefits are also supported overwhelmingly by the medical literature and highly respected pediatric organizations including the Texas Pediatric Society, American Academy of Pediatrics, and Pediatric Endocrine Society. Doctors for Change stands with these experts in opposing SB 1646.

This law is overreach of governmental authority and an intrusion between the private relationship between patients and families and their providers around critical health decisions. Confidentiality, trust, and teamwork are essential for helping every transgender and non-binary child and youth along their journey, and this invasion would set a dangerous precedent that the state, rather than medical professionals, can determine what medical care may or may not be provided. SB 1646 in no way supports that outcome. Therefore, we strongly urge the members of the Texas Senate State Affairs committee to reject SB 1646. Instead, we hope that the Texas Legislature will take up protective, not harmful measures for all children and youth.

For further information on the need for inclusive, culturally-competent healthcare for all LGBTQ+ Texans we urge you and your colleagues to read our policy brief, [Advancing Equitable Access to Culturally-competent healthcare and protection for discrimination for all LGBTQ+ Texans: Policy Recommendations for the Texas Legislature.](#)

Signed on behalf of Doctors for Change,