

We, the parents of transgender children, are alarmed by the spate of anti-transgender legislation proposed in legislatures across the country. There are nearly a dozen bills filed in state legislatures across the country attempting to criminalize or severely limit access to gender-affirming care for our children. These bills are misguided, misinformed, and most importantly, mean-spirited.

There's a reason this legislation is opposed by medical experts like the American Medical Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics: it would limit critically important care that trans youth often do need, while spreading misinformation about the kind of care that trans children receive.

We know better than anyone what our children need in order to thrive: access to best practice, evidence-based gender affirming health care. Such care, administered by qualified professionals, is literally life-saving for our children. These health care decisions must be made on a case by case basis, in careful consultation with a medical team, and with the goal of reducing the physical and emotional distress experienced by many transgender children. They should not be made by politicians who think they know better than medical professionals.

These bills are not about addressing an actual problem - they are simply further attempts to vilify transgender children. Proponents of these bills are using scare tactics to demonize transgender children and the adults who love and support them. In South Dakota, the same legislator who has repeatedly put forward piece after piece of anti-transgender legislation this year claimed responsibility for bills across the country that mirror HB 1057, the bill he authored denying transgender children the benefit of best-practice medical care and imposing criminal penalties on doctors who provide it. Similar bills in other states would classify parents who support their child's transition as child abusers. That's ridiculous. Politicians should stop telling doctors how to do their jobs and focus on their own.

As parents, we have seen first-hand how access to medically necessary care has helped and, in many cases, saved our children. The spread of these cruel bills has left our children scared. No legislative body should create obstacles to families seeking this care, or punish parents and medical professionals who are responsible for providing medical care and expert guidance. If enacted, these bills will compromise the well-being of our children, from creating increased anxiety and fear, and possibly even leading them to harm themselves.

We cannot and will not stand by while lawmakers play politics with our children's lives. It is time for legislatures to stand down on these attacks, and leave the care of our children in our hands and in the hands of our trusted medical providers.