

Children's Defense Fund

Children's Rights

<https://www.childrensdefense.org/blog/response-to-texas-leaders-statements-trans-children/>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

Americas children deserve the freedom to be their authentic selves. Last week, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton released a non-binding legal opinion deeming pediatric gender-affirming care child abuse. Governor Greg Abbott followed by directing state agencies to investigate. Meanwhile, more than 65,000 Texas children were actually abused or neglected in 2020 and 251 lost their lives. These leaders words and actions are a heartless attack on children and contradict guidance from every major medical association in the nation. Nowhere in this country should any parent fear that their child may become a victim to this type of political game.

While the order bears no legal weight, its impact will be felt most of all by our children and their families especially Black and brown children already disproportionately impacted by child protective services. Such rhetoric can deter health care providers from treating trans children and exacerbate fears, making youth reluctant to explore their identities or talk to others about their feelings. Trans children in Texas have endured years of anti-trans legislation, from bathroom bans to bills banning trans students from school sports. We have seen this pattern across the nation, as state legislatures make similar attacks year after year, and it needs to stop. Gender affirming care offers a lifeline to trans children and affirms their very right to exist. If these politicians truly cared about children, they would expand, not deny, access to gender affirming care so that all children regardless of race, creed, class, sexual orientation, or gender identity can receive the health and mental health services they need.

Voices across all spectrums of privilege and geography must rise to protect our children from these vicious efforts to inhibit their care. We speak as two cis-gendered, heterosexual men. One white, one Black. One from Texas living in the nations capital, the other from Washington, D.C. living in Texas. Commitment to the nations children and youth brings us together.

To transgender children, and all children: We see you. We love you. You deserve to feel loved, safe, and free to enjoy your youth. We will keep fighting to make that a reality.

For our children,

Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson
President and CEO, CDF

Patrick Bresette
Executive Director, CDF-Texas

A gift today helps children get the help they need

The Childrens Defense Fund is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our Federal Tax ID number is 52-0895622.

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Fight for children, stay informed and know when to act.