



# Action Child Protection

Making **Quality** Child Welfare  
Practice **Possible**

Action for Child Protection (Action) strongly opposes the politically motivated, misguided efforts by numerous state governments to restrict or criminalize gender-affirming supportive care and therapies for children and adolescents. Standing in solidarity with parents who are compassionately striving to give their children a voice and the space to realize their identities, Action joins numerous medical organizations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, Pediatric Endocrine Society, the American Medical Association, American Psychological Association, and American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry in condemning this governmental overreach on the rights of children and families.

In the most recent and stark example of punitive measures against gender-affirming care, the state of Texas issued an executive order making it a form of child abuse for parents to support their children in accessing services that would assist them in realizing their gender identity. While this effort has been hindered by numerous legal challenges, there continues to be similar draconian legislative measures against families with transgender youth making their way through statehouses in Alabama, Florida, Idaho, Louisiana, and Mississippi, just to name a few.

These highly insensitive and intrusive attempts to limit or criminalize mental health and medical therapies for transgender youth is problematic on multiple levels. These efforts to counter the wishes of transgender youth and challenge the autonomy of families are not based on any modern understanding of gender identity, and therefore, could not genuinely be motivated by a blanket concern for the best interest of children. These state level attacks are inconsistent with established evidence base practices for gender-diverse and transgender youth, and it is absurd to characterize gender affirming care as either child maltreatment or a threat to child safety. On the contrary, supportive services for children and youth who are discovering or embracing their gender identity is critically important for their physical and mental health.

Additionally, the attempted expansive interpretation of child abuse and neglect statutes is a potential disaster for all children and families. Expanding what constitutes child maltreatment beyond the commonly accepted types of child abuse and neglect has significant implications for government intrusion with families by convoluting the mission of already overwhelmed child welfare systems. Given the already exceedingly high demands for child welfare agencies to serve unsafe children and vulnerable families, the risk of those same agencies being used inappropriately to interfere in the lives of healthy functioning families and protective parents demands unequivocal condemnation from the professional child welfare community. As leading experts in child welfare and child safety intervention, Action strongly advocates for helping services that increase child safety, permanency, well-being. For gender-diverse and transgender children and youth, access to gender-affirming care, family supports, and encouraging parents directly contributes to their physical and emotional security, stability, and development.

Action strongly opposes any efforts to limit access to crucial services for these children and youth and is adamantly against the criminalization and traumatic misuse of state child welfare service agencies to circumvent parents' rights to support their gender-diverse and transgender children and youth.

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