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H. 4624 LWVSC Testimony before the House Medical and Health Affairs Subcommittee

The League of Women Voters of South Carolina (LWVSC) supports equal rights for all persons regardless of race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or disability. We also support access to quality medical care for all persons. This bill would prevent persons with gender dysphoria from exercising their right to access appropriate medical treatments as defined by respected medical associations.

The American Psychiatric Association defines “transgender” as a person whose sex assignment at birth does not align with their gender identity. They go on to say that:¹

Support for people with gender dysphoria may include open-ended exploration of their feelings and experiences of gender identity and expression. . . . Social affirmation may include an individual adopting pronouns, names, and various aspects of gender expression that match their gender identity. Legal affirmation may involve changing name and gender markers on various forms of government identification. Medical affirmation may include pubertal suppression for adolescents with gender dysphoria and gender-affirming hormones like estrogen and testosterone for older adolescents and adults. Medical affirmation is not recommended for prepubertal children. Some adults (and less often adolescents) may undergo various aspects of surgical affirmation.

Family and societal rejection of gender identity are some of the strongest predictors of mental health difficulties among people who are transgender.

The National Center for Biotechnology Information, National Institutes of Health (NIH), has posted on gender dysphoria at the National Library of Medicine.² They note that:

*The World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) publishes the Standards of Care (SOC) defining clinical guidelines for the care of transsexual, transgender, and gender non-conforming persons in order to maximize the health and well-being of patients with gender dysphoria. **All treatment options should be offered***

This bill would prevent persons under 18 being offered the nationally accepted standard of care in South Carolina. It proposes very serious harm to persons with this condition. What we see in this bill is not small government. It is not respect for parental rights. It is not protection of persons with gender dysphoria. It is an attempt to ignore medical science and force persons with this condition to conform to social norms acceptable to a segment of society, at immense cost to themselves. This is not the legitimate business of government, and this bill should be rejected.

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¹ “What is Gender Dysphoria?” <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/gender-dysphoria/what-is-gender-dysphoria>. Accessed 3 Jan 2024.

² Garima Garg, Ghada Eishimy, Raman Marwaha. 22 Jul 2023. “Gender Dysphoria,” National Library of Medicine, NIH: National Center for Biotechnology Information. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK532313/>.