

HB 2649 -- GENDER TRANSITION PROCEDURES

SPONSOR: Pollock (123)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on General Laws by a vote of 10 to 5.

This bill establishes the "Missouri Save Adolescents from Experimentation (SAFE) Act".

This bill specifies that, a physician or other health care professional cannot provide gender transition procedures to any individual under 18 years of age or refer the individual to any health care professional for gender transition procedures.

A physician can perform the following procedures that are not gender transition procedures to an individual under 18 years of age:

- (1) Services to individuals born with a medically verifiable disorder of sex development including, but not limited to, an individual with external biological sex characteristics that are irresolvably ambiguous, such as those born with 46 XX chromosomes with virilization, 46 XY chromosomes with undervirilization, or having both ovarian and testicular tissue.
- (2) Services provided when a physician has otherwise diagnosed an individual with a disorder of sexual development and determined through genetic or biochemical testing that the individual does not have normal sex chromosome structure, sex steroid hormone production, or sex steroid hormone action.
- (3) The treatment of any infection, injury, disease, or disorder that has been caused by or exacerbated by the performance of gender transition procedures regardless of whether the gender transition procedure was performed in accordance with state and federal law or whether funding for the gender transition procedure is permissible in accordance with the bill. Public funds shall not be directly or indirectly used, granted, paid, or distributed to any individual, entity, or organization that provides gender transition procedures to an individual under 18 years of age.
- (4) Any procedure undertaken because the individual suffers from a physical disorder, physical injury, or physical illness that would, as certified by a physician, place the individual in imminent danger of death or impairment of a major bodily function unless surgery is performed.

Gender transition procedures can not be performed by a physician or

other health care professional employed by the state, county, or local government and the procedures can not be performed at a health care facility owned by the state, county, or local government.

Anyone who violates the provisions of this bill can be subject of civil and administrative actions.

A health carrier or health benefit plan that offers or issues health benefit plans that are delivered, issued for delivery, continued, or renewed in this state on or after January 1, 2023, shall not include reimbursement for gender transition procedures for an individual under 18 years of age. A health carrier or health benefit plan that offers or issues health benefit plans that are delivered, issued for delivery, continued, or renewed in this state on or after January 1, 2023, shall not be required to provide coverage for gender transition procedures.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this bill protects vulnerable children under the age of 18 from initiating permanent surgeries or changes to their bodies before a time when they are fully prepared to make those decisions. These children deserve and need the support required to address and grow out of gender dysphoria. Often, these children are not born in the wrong body, but are instead reacting to abuse or traumatic events from childhood. Counseling and therapy are the important and appropriate avenues to address the issues faced by these children. Studies have shown that gender or puberty treatment in adolescence does not lead to a lowering of psychological issues or suicide rates. Guidelines for care that have supported puberty blockers or other gender treatment have been mistaken in the past and more recently an emphasis has been placed on psychotherapy over transition services. Parents often must make decisions on behalf of their children, and children often do not know what may be in their best interest or understand the gravity or permanence of their decisions. Further, some doctors are too willing to facilitate what patient's requests of them. This bill protects vulnerable children from a serious and life-altering decision before they are old enough to truly consent, allowing them the opportunity to grow naturally.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Pollock; Anita Banes; Brenda Kennedy; Connie R Larson; Jennifer Houcek, Concerned Women for America; Julia Jansma; Kim A Stutesman; Les J Larson; Lynn Roaseau; Martha Jane Twenter; Misty Veasman; Patricia Verde; Peggy Banks; Virginia Ashpole; Glenda Lawrence; Jaclyn Riebold; Mary Sharon Rockley; Maureen Catherine Lauer; Rita Lavanchy; Beverley Fries; Mrs. Debby Jones; Lou Ann Saighman; Nicholas J Stutesman; April Deters; Audrey Newberry; Bev Ehlen, Concerned Women for America of Missouri; Brenda S Hopfer; Carole Zumwalt; Christine

White; Cindy Deggendorf; Darlene Barrett; Debra Kohl; Dianne C Lantrip; Don Hinkle, Missouri Baptist Convention; Gail Irwin; Janet Dabbs; Juli Qard; Kristen Lewis; Lauren Hawse; Mahri Irvine, PHD, Women's Liberation Front; Mary Ann Coatney; Matthew Arri; Mitchell D Schubert; Nancy Gregory; Patricia Tocco; Raynell Gegel; Robin Gallardo; Roger A. Fries; Roger L Ford; Sara Bohnert; Shirley Ford; Susan Taylor; Terri Baker; Adrienne Jacobsmeyer; Alanda Powell; Amy Grant Boyd; Andrea Sheum; Asenath Marie Chapman; Becky Gilzow; Becky Woods; Bryant Davidson; Carol Eighmey; Carolyn Jo Odneal; Catherine A Hughes; Cheryl Kleeschulte; Cindy Thomas; Clif Ehlen; Danielle Davidson; Debra Talbert; Diana Jones; Dianna Hutchinson; Donna Davis; Elaine Mills; Elizabeth Ann Flynn; Elizabeth King-Thomason; Erin Tallon; Floyd Bowles; Frank Freudenthal; Gary Farrar; Grace Bellante; Jan Farrar; Jennifer Casati-Zajicek; Jennifer Daniels; Jo Bolhofner; Joanne Schrader; Jodean Foster; Judy Branstetter; Julia Holdmeyer; Kathleen Burnette; Kelly Brock; Kristi Owens; Laura Souden; Laurie C. Wall; Lynda Willis; Marlys Schoenwetter; Mary C Martin; Mary Carter; Mary Jo Peck; Mendi Wormington; Michael Quinn; Norma Putnam; Polly Freshwater; Rachel Deckerd; Rebecca White; Rita Thackeray; Russell A Walker; Sandra Kay Steenbergen; Shannon L. Sydow; Sharon E. Peirick; Sheila Hancock; Shirley Brown; Shirley Handy; Sonya Baysinger; Tedi Payne; Tim Wilkerson; Todd Ferris Mosby; Trudy M. Parker; Virginia Griffen; Wanda Roam; Becky Quinn; Delmmar K. Mills; Marci Elizabeth Hukill, Rn-Bc; Martha Staggs; Nicole Olszewski; Rachel Poston; Scott Grover; Wendell Glance; William Abraham; Beatrice Abraham; Bob Easley; Cheryl A Turnbull; David Bragg; Estella Christiansen; Hannah Huff; Jennifer Gore; Johanna Beaudean; Kriket Riddle; Linda Ealey; Lisa K Durnell; Lorna Piper; Melissa Sundblom; Pat Vogler; Amber Crawford; Charles Douglas Peth; Diane Lindsay; George S Whitlow; Honorable Therese A Sander; Jane Fosse; Kim Laird; Margaret Christine Yaudas; Peter G Douglas; Roberta Jean McCammon; Sherry A. Tallon; Alex Manford; Deborah Fromme; Tammy Palisch; Dr. Laura Haynes, International Federation For Therapeutic and Counselling Choice (London, Uk); Erin Brewer; Representative Robin Lundstrum-Arkansas; Morli Wilcox; Beverly Behlmann; Joan Rawson; Kacey Dea Zelch; Kate Stratton; Ron Tallon; Dana; and Candace Keller.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that the decision to explore gender affirming procedures is a very personal and sensitive one that should be made by parents, their children, and their doctors. It is not the place of the government to step in and take away options from a family to explore and pursue appropriate means to ensure their children are able to fully be themselves. Studies have shown that psychological issues and suicide rates do lower for those who are able to pursue treatment and transition services. This bill is contrary to medical standards and the purpose of medical care, it does not save lives.

Instead, it takes away potentially life saving gender affirming options for those vulnerable minors whose health and well being relies on these options. Gender surgery is never considered as an option for those under the age of 18, so this bill is not putting a stop to or otherwise preventing these sorts of procedures; instead, it only causes harm by limiting otherwise appropriate and critical care and services. The medical community is overwhelmingly in support of providing hormone therapies and recognizes the distinction between sex and gender. Access to life-saving care should not be limited and should be a decision between the family and doctors in accordance with medical guidelines. Gender affirming procedures are not experimentation, and this bill is an overstep by the government to limit critical care and services for vulnerable children.

Testifying against the bill were Kendall Martinez-Wright; Allyn Harris Dault; Amy Easterling; Amy Salladay; Angela Sanders; Debi Jackson; Erin S Bullett PHD; Jenna Strawn; Jennifer Stone; Lori King; Matthew Easterling; Megan Von Arb; Rebekah Easterling; Amber Benge; Christy Potthast; Stephanie Rittgers; Christen Santoscoy; Lindsay Ellison; Tom Ferri; Virginia C Campbell; Connie S. Thomas; Julia Armbruster; Kathleen K Berberich; Kimberly Maxwell; Lynn Nienkemper; Mary Coore; Matt Forbis; Michael R Walk; Nicole Kremer; Quinn Jackson; Sarah Jamieson; Sloan Sheffield Cowell; Vienna I. Austin; Alex Long; Amanda Knittel; Amanda Michel; Anthony J Decarli; Ashley Laurentius; Ashley O'Daniel; Ashley S Millham; Brad Jackson; Bryna G. Williams; Christi Kelly; Chrystilyn Schmitz; Claudia Walk; Colleen Spoehr; Courtney Jorgenson Bernardin; Daniel A. Rees; Dava-Leigh Brush; Dawn Buckley; Deborah Bohlmann; Deborah Char; Drs. Cynthia Herrick, Thomas Baranski, And Kelley ; Elizabeth Lyons; Greg Campbell; Ida Fogle; Jamie Vander Clute; Jarrett Pillsbury; Jason Mayer; Jasper Joyce; Jenna Roberson; Jennifer Halla-Sindelar; Jennifer Kanady; Jessica Rekate; Karen Halla; Kathleen Murphy Lang; Katie Jean Williamson; Kelli Ann Holland; Kelly Burnett; Kelly Crane; Laura Burkhardt; Laura Gutierrez Perez; Lisa Rees; Melina Constantine Miseo; Melissa Dunn; Miriam De Jonge; Nadine B Ball; Nancy Goth; Pamela Skelly; Peggy Dewille; Rebecca Janski; Roxanne K Richards; Ryan Tinker; Sara Schmidt; Sara Simpson; Sharon Cleek; Spencer Toder; Stephanie Sutton; Susan Gibson; Tammy Hillebrand; Vernon Leming; Wendy Miller; William Schwartz; Zebrina Nicole Looney; Patrick Thomas Mann; Stephen Helgren; Susan Quiros; Caroline Otte; Jessica Townes; Josh Becker; Kevin Smith; Amber Withycombe; Andrea Tukin; Andrew Reich; Brian Powell; Clarisse Teepe-Fryrear; Erin Gray; Gina Meyer; Ian Hornstra, MD, PHD; Jacob Kruse; Jennifer Harris Dault; Joline Abbadessa; Joseph Zahn; Julie Gaebe; Kathryn Kaufmann; Kelly Carroll; Leah Russell; Lynne Meyerkord; Missouri Family Health Council, Inc.; Mitch Morice; Nichole Brinkmann; Phillip Caldwell; Shawna Scott; Sierra Tucker; Terica Donnelly; Whitney Adams;

Missouri Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics; Abigail Hoover; Adelia Ganson; Adrienna Painter; Ann Zimpfer; Anne Fitzsimmons; Autumn Cammarata; Betsy Cammarata; Brigitte D Sheridan; Cheryl Kelley; Chris; Clark Roman; December Harmon; Derek W Thomas; Elizabeth Fischer; Emily Wodicker; Eury Speir; Jennifer Meyer; Joe Wilson; Kelly Halaska; Kerri Schafer; Lexie O'Brien; Lola Marie Davis; Miriam Mead; Rebecca Watson; Robert Hines; Robin Duntze; Sara Neilson; Sarah Walker; Suzanne Shimkus; Tara Reuter Johnson; Valorie Engholm; Missouri State Medical Association; Emily; James Janes; Janet Gamble Duff; Naphtali Faris; Teresa Johnson; American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri; Heather Allman; Sarah Garwood, St. Louis Children's Hospital; Christopher Lewis, St. Louis Children's Hospital; Nick Zingarelli; Corey Hyman; Christine Hyman; Danielle Meert; James Thurow; Susan Halla; American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; Johnathan Mann; Megan Cates, DO; PROMO; Robert Philip Schmidt; Andy Impastato; Catherine Moser; David; Evan Jaime Baker; James Ray Easterling; Jamie Michelle Ameling; Jeff Lofink; John Conway; John Hyman; Kathy Balmer; Kaylene Merchant; Leslie Heberlie; Linda Hoechst; Michelle Lambert; Scott McKellar; Tstanley; Rene E Freels; Dr. Stephen Adams; Kathy Neely; Melody Reich; Roberto Quiros; and Janette Hanna.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill submitted written testimony, which can be found online.

Testifying on the bill were Missouri Catholic Conference; and Arnie C. Dienoff.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.