



News Release

## American Academy of Pediatrics Speaks Out Against Bills Harming Transgender Youth

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**By: Lee Savio Beers, MD, FAAP, President, American Academy of Pediatrics**

“With alarm and dismay, pediatricians have watched bills advance through state legislatures across the country with the sole purpose of threatening the health and well-being of transgender youth.

“The American Academy of Pediatrics has long been on the record in support of affirmative care for transgender children through our [clinical policy](#). Today, we are going on the record to oppose public policies that would allow for the opposite.

“Several state legislatures have introduced bills that would prohibit gender-affirming care for gender-diverse and transgender youth and forbid transgender youth from participating on sports teams according to their gender identity. These bills are dangerous. If left unchallenged, there will be transgender teens in certain zip codes who

will be unable to access basic medical care, and pediatricians in certain zip codes who would be criminalized for providing medical care. And, transgender youth would be denied the ability to participate in sports according to their gender identity.

“We are in the middle of a pandemic that has led to staggering rises in mental health concerns among children and teens. Transgender children had statistically higher rates of depression and suicidal ideation before the pandemic: around half of transgender youth consider suicide, and a third attempt it.

“The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that youth who identify as transgender have access to comprehensive, gender-affirming, and developmentally appropriate health care that is provided in a safe and inclusive clinical space. We also recommend that playing on sports teams helps youth develop self-esteem, correlates positively with overall mental health, and appears to have a protective effect against suicide.

“These bills not only ignore these recommendations, they undermine them. Instead, the legislation would allow policymakers rather than pediatricians to determine the best course of care for our patients, and in some medically underserved states, it could mean losing an already limited number of pediatric practitioners who care for transgender youth. Forcing transgender children to play on teams according to their sex assigned at birth, rather than the gender they live in, also puts their physical and mental health at risk.

“Evidence-based medical care for transgender and gender diverse children is a complex issue. Pediatricians are best able to determine what care is necessary and appropriate for these children, but these bills interfere in the physician-patient-family relationship and would cause undue harm.

“Politics has no place here. Transgender children, like all children, just want to belong. We will fight state by state, in the courts and on the national stage to make sure they know they do.”

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*The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 67,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults. For more information, visit [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org) and follow us on Twitter @AmerAcadPeds.*

