



## The Texas State Employees Union-CWA 6186 stands in opposition to the attack on trans children, families and FPS workers.

**O**n February 22, 2020, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton released an opinion that allowing minors to receive gender affirming care such as puberty blockers and hormone therapy is child abuse under state law.

The following day, Governor Greg Abbott sent a letter to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, calling on it to “conduct a prompt and thorough investigation” of any instances of minors undergoing “elective procedures for gender transitioning.” The letter tasked those who work with children including teachers, nurses, and social workers as well as members of the general public with reporting such claims adding, “state law provides criminal penalties for failure to report such child abuse.”

The Texas State Employees Union is outraged. Our members who are charged with protecting children and families are being ordered to violate long-standing codes of ethics that includes provision of gender affirming care supported by the American Medical Association, American Psychiatric Association, the National Association of Social Workers, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and others. Governor Abbott’s letter violates the civil rights and privacy of children and their families that al-

ready experience illegal discrimination. It exposes Texas Department of Family and Protective Services workers to moral injury and professional censor by demanding that they go against their moral beliefs and the standards of their professions.

We believe that Attorney General Ken Paxton’s opinion and Governor Abbott’s directive will be found to be illegitimate and unconstitutional in the Courts. Meanwhile, as representatives of state workers and advocates for all children and their families, the Texas State Employees Union will do everything in our power to support and defend workers and families who make the hard choice to stand up to the directive, against any retaliation and abuse.

The Texas State Employees Union joins the Texas AFT, the Texas AFL-CIO, and LGBTQIA+ advocacy groups in solidarity, urging all Texans to stand up to the cruel and illegal orders that amount to child abuse and that target the state workers who protect and support children every day. Professor Lisa Moore, Director of LGBTQ Studies at UT-Austin sums it up. “Transgender children and their families deserve to know that they are safe, loved, and valued by their fellow Texans.”



On February 22, 2022, Texas Governor Greg Abbott, communicated a directive equating gender-affirming healthcare for transgender youth with child abuse, instructing the Department of Family and Protective Services to investigate families providing this life-saving care to their transgender and gender-diverse community accordingly. Alliance at Texas State University offers the following quotes from organizations who specialize in gender affirming care for transgender youth.

**American Academy of Pediatrics:**

*“Evidence-based medical care for transgender and gender diverse children is a complex issue that pediatricians are uniquely qualified to provide. This directive undermines the physician-patient-family relationship and will cause undue harm to children in Texas. TPS opposes the criminalization of evidence-based, gender-affirming care for transgender youth and adolescents. We urge the prioritization of the health and well-being of all youth, including transgender youth,”* said The Texas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, The Texas Pediatric Society President Charleta Guillory, MD, MPH, FAAP.

**National Association of Social Workers:**

*“These continued attempts to change the definition of child abuse are in direct opposition to social work values, principles, and our Code of Ethics and pose danger to transgender youth and their families.”* NASW/TX reminds licensed social workers that this a non-binding legal opinion and they still have professional discretion on mandatory reporting. No rules on reporting were changed through this opinion, nor through the Governor’s letter.

**Frank C Worrell, PhD,**

**President of the American Psychological Association:**

*“This ill-conceived directive from the Texas governor will put at-risk children at even higher risk of anxiety, depression, self-harm, and suicide. Gender-affirming care promotes the health and well-being of transgender youth and is provided by medical and mental health professionals, based on well-established scientific research. The peer-reviewed research suggests that transgender children and youth who are treated with affirmation and receive evidence-based treatments tend to see improvements in their psychological well-being.*

*Asking licensed medical and mental health professionals to ‘turn in’ parents who are merely trying to give their children needed and evidence-based care would violate patient confidentiality as well as professional ethics. The American Psychological Association opposes politicized intrusions into the decisions that parents make with medical providers about caring for their children.”*

**The American Medical Association:**

*“The American Medical Association (AMA) today urged governors to oppose state legislation that would prohibit medically necessary gender transition-related care for minor patients, calling such efforts a dangerous intrusion into the practice of medicine.”*

**The American Music Therapy Association:**

*The American Music Therapy Association adamantly opposes the Governor’s directive which directly contradicts the findings of the American Medical Association (AMA), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Psychological Association (APA), and the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, all of which state that gender affirming healthcare is lifesaving and supportive of healthy child development. The scope of music therapy practice is based on the values of non-maleficence, beneficence, ethical practice; professional integrity, respect, excellence; and diversity. The Governor’s statement is an oppressive, transphobic, and dangerous initiative that is in direct conflict with AMTA’s values and known science in support of safe care to vulnerable and marginalized youth.*

**Lambda Legal:**

*“Our hearts are with transgender youth in Texas and their families. We understand this is traumatizing and pledge to continue to support all the loving and supportive Texans and Texas groups who are working on the ground to continue to push back against these unrelenting attacks. We at Lambda Legal are with you. If you are contacted by child protective services or CPS opens an investigation against you for supporting your trans child, contact our help desk at <https://www.lambdalegal.org/helpdesk>.”*