

Restricting rights and infuriating communities

Texas legislature passed bill to stop young transgender kids from being able to transition

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Dispatch Reporter

Ding!
Hearing their phone go off, senior Arlo Craft checked their notifications to find a remind message from Sexuality and Gender Acceptance club (SAGA) sponsor Bree Rolfe. It was a link to a twitter thread. Reading further, their heart dropped.

Governor Greg Abbott issued a directive in a public letter, calling on the state of Texas to report parents of trans minors if it seems like their children are receiving gender-affirming medical care. Abbott's letter, released to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) on February 22, 2022, declared it child abuse to allow minors to transition.

"My immediate response was shock and concern," Craft said. "Just the idea that anybody could have so much hatred for such a broad group of people, to try and do something like that to them – especially as a government figure with so much authority and power and people who listen to them – it was almost unreal, and it was scary."

Immediately after hearing about the letter, Craft began research into the topic. To their relief they found that the letter wasn't legally binding; it was more of a suggestion than a demand. They were also glad to hear that Texans, as well as allies nation-wide, were protesting the directive and what it means for trans youth. They shared these discoveries with

their friends, making sure to inform everybody who needed to know.

"When I heard about the 'classifying trans care as child abuse' thing, I was worried," senior Radio Farris said. "My mom's giving me gender affirming health care, I'm on testosterone currently, and It's terrifying to know that my mom could go to jail for supporting my own transition. Learning that it was a suggestion was a relief, but although Austin specifically is super accepting, if we lived in any other city in Texas, we would be in a lot more danger."

According to Craft, Abbott's directive was heavily based on a non-binding legal opinion from Attorney General Ken Paxton. In this opinion, Paxton stated that "each of the 'sex change' procedures and treatments," when administered to minors, "can legally constitute child abuse" under multiple points of the Texas Family Code. Abbott adhered to these ideas, and sent his letter only a day after.

"These ideas on child abuse are dumb," Pride Representative Chelsea McCaffrey said. "It's very bold of Abbott to say that this is child abuse when he let children freeze to death in the storm, and when he's allowing children to be put in cages at the border. Parents that are doing what's right by their children, and caring for them, and doing what is best for them, are not abusive."

Gender-modification procedures include: puberty blockers, hormone controllers, and gender affirmation surgery. Such procedures are



ROARING WITH PRIDE: Sophomore Clyde Warren participating in a protest at the capital and raising his views high and proud. Warren, as a member of the transgender community is fighting for his rights and pushes those around him to pursue and wear their identity with pride.
PHOTO BY Mazzy Warren

important to the trans community because they make trans men and women feel more comfortable with their bodies. Farris believes that politicians don't understand the problem

with banning these operations because they only consider the few people who regretted their operations and detransitioned. He believes that politicians take this to mean that everyone is either faking it or will regret it later.

"I was very irritated to hear this," senior El Wechsler said. "It's freaky to think that people know so little about what trans affirming action really is and how much it helps people. A lot of people think that it's this big, dangerous thing that kids will regret when they're older, when that's really not the case. The fact that people (like Abbott) can go so far just because they don't know anything about it is just really scary."

In his directive, Abbott urged the involvement of all "licensed professionals" and "members of the general public." Teachers were especially called on to submit cases to the DFPS, if they suspect their students are transitioning. The DFPS was ordered to "conduct a prompt and thorough inves-

tigation" of any such reports of minors being "subjugated to abusive gender transitioning procedures."

"It's just very concerning to see how much influence one person can have just by saying something," Wechsler said. "Knowing what that could mean further on is really worrying. I wasn't surprised that he supported this, but it really is concerning and disappointing."

The DFPS said they'd do as the letter demanded. According to DFPS spokesman Patrick Crimmins, nine investigations have opened against families under suspicion of supporting their children's medical transitions. In response, the state's largest pediatric hospital, Texas Children's Hospital, has stopped prescribing gender-affirming hormones. Contrary to those complying with Abbott's demands, AISD spokesperson Jason Stanford released a statement denouncing the letter and policies coming from the governor's desk.

"We are going to do what-

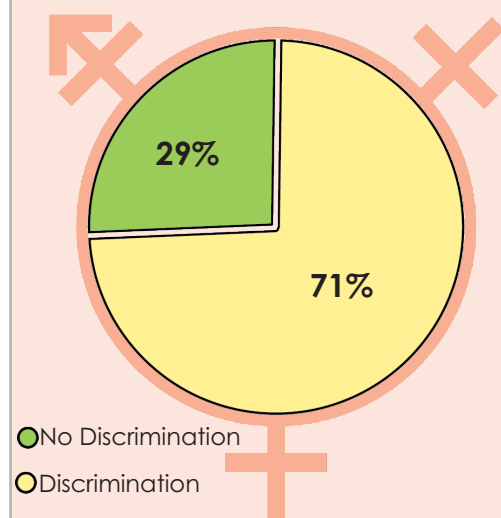
ever it takes to give every one of our students what they need to thrive," AISD spokesperson Jason Stanford said. "And that means every single kid, no matter what, including trans kids. Child abuse is too important to be used to score political points."

Many believe this has had a direct impact on LGBT youths all around Texas. Craft feels that it hurts trans morale and pride, and Farris believes it compounds a feeling of helplessness in trans minors who are already having a hard time coming to terms with their identities. He also fears that it might dissuade children from coming out to their parents, for fear of abandonment.

READ THE FULL ARTICLE AT:
thedispatchonline.net

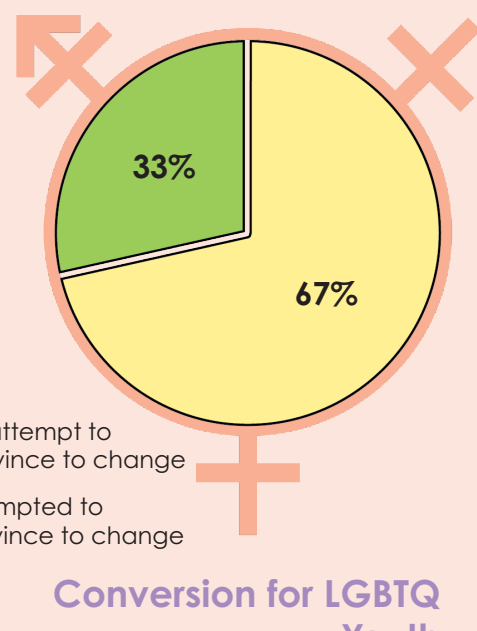


Discrimination for LGBTQ Youth



● No Discrimination
● Discrimination

Source: The Trevor Project



Conversion for LGBTQ Youth

● No attempt to convince to change
● Attempted to convince to change

ART BY Dylan Zellner