



American Psychoanalytic Association Speaks Out Against Harmful Laws Targeting Transgender Youth and Healthcare Providers

New York, NY – February 4, 2020 – The American Psychoanalytic Association urges South Dakota governor Kristi Noem to reject a recently passed bill in the state legislature known as the Vulnerable Child Protection Act (HB 1057). This harmful legislation would make it a misdemeanor for physicians or any other medical professional to perform gender reassignment surgeries on minors or anyone who provides patients younger than 16-years-old with hormone therapy. If passed, South Dakota would be the first state to impose such a law.

“APsAA strongly opposes efforts to legislate appropriate medical treatments for transgender youth based on political ideologies that ignore both scientific research and expert clinical opinion,” said Lee Jaffe, president of the Association. “This law is fundamentally dangerous and if it becomes law would jeopardize the health and mental well-being of transgender youth in South Dakota.”

Since the start of the 2020 legislative session, at least six states have proposed measures to restrict transgender minors' access to gender reassignment treatments, including surgery and hormone therapy. Some of the bills would make it illegal for physicians to administer the treatments, while others would classify the act as child abuse. If HB 1057 becomes law, it would make South Dakota the first state to make it illegal for physicians to assist minors in their gender reassignment process.

“As psychoanalysts, we know from research and clinical expertise that discriminatory laws such as this law in South Dakota and elsewhere will have long-term mental health consequences for transgender youth, contributing to increased risk of depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and suicidal behavior. We call on leaders to reject these misguided and dangerous laws.”

Since 1991, APsAA has issued numerous position statements supporting LGBTQ people regarding discrimination in military service, marriage equality, parenting, efforts to change sexual orientation and gender identity, and bullying and harassment. For a link to our position statements, please visit www.apsa.org/position-statements.

The American Psychoanalytic Association is the oldest and largest professional organization for psychoanalysts in North America, representing 3,000 members, 32 approved training institutes, and 38 affiliate societies throughout the United State. Visit apsa.org for more information.

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