

Name: Christy Olezeski

Title: Associate Professor

Organization or Agency: Yale Pediatric Gender Program

Topic: SB00214 - AA CONSOLIDATING STATUTORY PROVISIONS RELATING TO REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE SERVICES AND GENDER-AFFIRMING HEALTH CARE SERVICES.

Supports

Testimony:

Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Christy Olezeski, PhD. I am a resident of New Haven, CT and the Director of the Yale Pediatric Gender Program. The following are general comments on Senate Bill 214, An Act Consolidating Statutory Provisions Relating to Reproductive Health Care Services and Gender-Affirming Health Care Services.

I am an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry, Psychology Section, at the Yale School of Medicine. I have been at Yale for 10 years and have been working in the care of children and adolescents since my graduation in 2010. I am on the Board of the American Psychological Association's Division 37, Child and Family Policy and Practice, and am a member of the Divisions of LGBTQ Health (Div 44) and Pediatric Psychology (Div 54). I am also a WPATH member.

Shield laws are imperative for care. As threats against bodily autonomy are rising, we need to ensure that individuals can come to Connecticut to receive medically necessary care. As the increased legislation taking away access to bodily autonomy is having a chilling effect on providers shield laws are imperative to ensure that providers have protections to provide the treatment they have been trained to provide. As I am the Director of the Pediatric Gender Program I see firsthand how some patients are fleeing the states they have called home in order to get medically necessary care in CT. Gender-affirming care can be lifesaving for youth, and is a medical decision made between a child, their parent and their medical provider. We need to make sure that we have well-trained providers who are providing the best care according to the most recent research and professional guidelines. We also need to ensure that we have a safe place for youth and their families to access care, and safety for providers to provide such care. We must continue to uphold and strengthen our shield laws in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Christy Olezeski, PhD