

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Subcommittee on Health Ranking Member Anna Eshoo

Health Subcommittee Hearing on “Preparing for and Responding to Future Public Health Security Threats.”

June 14, 2023

Today we are considering eight proposals that increase access to care and reauthorize critical public health programs, and one proposal that does exactly the opposite.

I’m pleased that my legislation, H.R. 3226, the *PREEMIE Reauthorization Act*, is included in the hearing, and I thank my co-leads Representatives Miller-Meeks, Kelly, Burgess, Blunt Rochester, and Kiggans for their work on this important effort.

In 2005, I introduced the original PREEMIE Act with former Chairman Fred Upton which was the first and remains the only law to focus solely on the prevention of preterm births. We need a swift reauthorization to ensure the successful programs created by this law can continue.

H.R. 3226 will also improve future policy by studying the current gaps in our healthcare system that have led to the recent surge in preterm births and how we can address them.

Our hearing will also consider critical bipartisan bills, such as the *Preventing Maternal Deaths Reauthorization Act*, the *National Plan to End Parkinson’s Act*, and the *Firefighter Cancer Registry Reauthorization Act*.

But we’re also considering a proposal to damage the Children’s Hospitals Graduate Medical Education program irreparably by making hospitals choose between providing the standard of care for children experiencing gender dysphoria or losing funding that keeps them afloat. This should not be a choice here. It should not be one or the other.

For nearly 25 years, the CHGME Program has trained half of general pediatricians and a majority of pediatric specialists. In California, CHGME program funds are used by 7 children's hospitals to train over 906 full-time pediatric residents annually.

This is an extraordinary record, something we are proud of on both sides of the aisle because it has had the full support of members on both sides of the aisle. And that’s why it’s so difficult for me to comprehend why my Republican colleagues are subjecting children’s hospitals to a manufactured culture war that puts politics in between parents, children, and their pediatricians. This just shouldn’t be here. It just shouldn’t be here.

Specifically, the bill prohibits 19 specific procedures and any type of hormone therapy that could be perceived as gender-affirming for trans youth.

June 14, 2023

Page 2

This proposal threatens precious lives. It's not just a bunch of words on a piece of paper. As one pediatric endocrinologist said, "Every time politics and medicine co-mingle, people die." We're already seeing higher rates of maternal and infant death because of abortion restrictions that paralyze providers in an emergency. Now Republicans are attempting to ban 19 more procedures and treatments that should be a private decision between patients, their families, and their doctors.

The proposal also worsens the mental health crisis that trans children are facing.

This is really sad and if I had a magic wand, I would just wish this away, but it's something that is before the committee today.

I want to close with this quote. I was watching the news one night and there was a Nebraska lawmaker, an independent, a woman, a mother, and this is what she said, "I'm asking you to love your family more than you hate mine."

I hope that this issue will somehow not make it here. This doesn't belong here. We follow science, we have worked on a bipartisan basis to build and build and build across our healthcare system. So much of the decision-making is private, that's where it belongs.

Thank you to our panel of expert witnesses for being here today, and I yield back.