

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.

Health Subcommittee Hearing on “Legislative Solutions to Bolster Preparedness and Response for All Hazards and Public Health Security Threats”

June 14, 2023

Today, could have been a bipartisan hearing, but once again Republicans are playing political games with the health care of Americans. I am deeply disappointed by the partisan, extremist legislation that Republicans are bringing up for consideration today to reauthorize the Children’s Hospitals Graduate Medical Education (CHGME) program. This unnecessary and discriminatory bill is going to dominate this hearing, which is unfortunate since there are bipartisan public health policies that we should also be discussing here today.

The CHGME program is a longstanding effort to support the training of pediatricians and ensure that children across the country have proper access to care. This is a popular program. Since its inception it has consistently received strong bipartisan support. In fact, reauthorization of CHGME has always been done in a bipartisan manner.

Today, we should be considering legislation introduced by my colleague Representative Schrier that is a bipartisan reauthorization of this important program. But instead, Republicans have chosen to notice a partisan bill that includes language to ban medically necessary care for transgender youth.

The Republican bill goes against decades of scientific research and evidence that have established clear standards of care – care that is effective and essential to the health and well-being of transgender youth. Care that is supported by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, and every other leading medical association. Banning evidence-based care is an affront to science, and it is dangerous.

Let me be clear about what is happening here: Republicans want to prescribe in excruciating detail in federal legislation which medical treatments and care are acceptable to provide to young people. They are trying to overrule doctors, patients, and their parents.

We know that transgender youth are already vulnerable to mental health challenges. Nearly one in five transgender and nonbinary youth have attempted suicide, and nearly half have seriously considered suicide in the past year. This is staggering, and Republican attempts to deny necessary medical care only puts them at greater risk. We know that providing care decreases suicide risk. We should be supporting and affirming transgender young people for who they are.

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This Republican ban also restricts options and disregards parental rights. They are telling parents that Republican politicians know better than they do what is best for their child. This is the height of hypocrisy from a group that supposedly believes in limited government.

Not only is this ban an attack on transgender youth and their parents, but it is also an attack on doctors and other health care providers. It would prohibit any CHGME funding if a hospital or training program performs this important care. This would cripple the funding mechanism that trains over half of all pediatricians in the United States. Children's hospitals would be forced to make a choice between providing medically necessary care for their patients or forgoing federal funding dedicated to the training of their residents. By attacking providers and their training, Republicans are trying to dismantle medical education, research, and care for all children and adolescents.

It is quite simple – Republicans should stay out of the doctor's office. I yield back.