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RE: Support for S.F. 2209

March 20, 2024

To Chair Melissa Wiklund and members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

Gender Justice is a legal and policy advocacy organization dedicated to advancing gender equity through the law. We believe that all people, no matter their gender, deserve affordable access to the healthcare they need, and that best practice medical care for transgender people should be no exception as a crucial aspect of transgender people's health and livelihood.

Gender affirming medical care drastically improves quality of life for transgender people, with 98% of transgender people reporting increased life satisfaction after receiving it. Gender affirming care is supported widely by major medical organizations including the American Medical Association and American Academy of Family Physicians.

Since 2015, Minnesota Departments of Commerce and Health have maintained a practice of ensuring coverage of this care for transgender people, and the passage of SF 2209 (Dibble) would codify those practices, increasing predictability for insurers, consumers, and providers. Additionally, the bill adds a definition of Gender Affirming Care in line with medical best practices, to provide clarity and security for patients and providers, and ensure that legislators and insurers don't get between patients and their care team.

This step is needed now to protect healthcare access for trans Minnesotans and trans people from around the midwest seeking care here. Forty-seven percent of transgender people in the US have thought about moving states because of their own state government considering or passing legislation targeting them for unequal treatment according to the new results of the 2022 US Trans Survey. Meanwhile, clinics in Minnesota are reporting surges of new transgender patients seeking care. Last year, the Minnesota legislature passed the Trans Refuge Act to protect Minnesota providers and visiting patients from persecution by other states. To ensure the promise of refuge for new and residing trans Minnesotans, we must ensure trans people can access the care they need.

Please support the Gender Affirming Care Act for the many transgender people who call this state home.

Thank you for your support,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Megan Peterson".

Megan Peterson
Executive Director, Gender Justice