



March 20, 2024
Senate Jobs and Economic Development Committee

Dear Chair Champion and Committee Members,

On behalf of Children's Minnesota, I am writing in support of SF 3502 which seeks to establish non-profit grant funding to empower LGBTQ+ individuals and families seeking refuge in Minnesota.

Children's Minnesota is the state's largest pediatric healthcare system. We serve a diverse patient population, and nearly 50% of our patients are enrolled in Medicaid. To best serve our community, we opened our Gender Health program five years ago, understanding that transgender and gender-diverse kids and their families needed a medical partner, resource, and ally along their journey.

After the Minnesota Transgender Refuge bill was signed into law in 2023, a PFund survey found that over 150 individuals and families were moving to Minnesota to seek refuge. Additionally, our Gender Health clinic at Children's Minnesota saw a 30% increase in new patient calls as states surrounding us restricted or banned gender-affirming care. We welcome transgender and gender diverse children and families with open arms, but our waitlist is growing, and our team at Children's Minnesota and our colleagues in the Twin Cities are outmatched by the demand. While the Trans Refuge law was an important first step to protecting essential health care for transgender and gender-diverse youth, we must do more.

To improve access to care, we are calling on Minnesota lawmakers to invest in the infrastructure we need to provide specialized training for more providers who can approach this care in alignment with well-established clinical guidelines. Specifically, we are asking for investment in a grant-funded training program to help expand access to essential healthcare for transgender and gender-diverse youth by leveraging the expertise and care systems already in place.

This critical funding will not only expand access to care for those already living in Minnesota (our waitlist prior to the passage of the Trans Refuge Bill was already over a year-long), it will also welcome those new families moving to Minnesota by delivering on our promise that our state would be a place where essential health care would be protected and accessible for their families. This investment in healthcare infrastructure will improve health outcomes, particularly mental health outcomes, for transgender and gender diverse youth in Minnesota while at the same time, attracting new families to our state who bring with them workforce skills, financial resources, real estate investment and contribute to a culture of inclusion.

When transgender and gender-diverse kids are seen, heard, and believed, they do better. When we support kids to be who they are, we know they can grow up happy, healthy, safe, and strong. With this bill, we can continue to show our unwavering support for transgender and gender diverse children and provide more of the essential care they need.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Angela Kade Goepferd".

Dr. Angela Kade Goepferd
Medical Director, Gender Health Program
Chief Education Officer
Children's Minnesota