

HB0782
Meredith Lovell
Opposed

Dear Distinguished Committee Members,

I am writing you as a concerned mother of four who has spent a decade working in the mental health field.

Children are not fit to make these choices. With no minimum age listed on the bill you have left a lot of questions. Why was an age left out? How will a 5-year-old get to a clinic for treatment and a pharmacy to fill prescription drugs? Then return to subsequent appointments for medication monitoring and continued therapy? Frontal lobe development is not present in minor children. That is the center of our brain that controls cognitive skills. How are we expecting undeveloped brains to make such weighty medical decisions? I will argue that age of consent is not an appropriate age for such decisions either.

As stated above minor children require supervision when they are on pharmaceutical psychological drugs. They have regular therapy appointments and medication checks to talk with caregivers about the impacts of the medication and if changes are to be made. Is the bill definitely being amended to remove all pharmaceutical drug treatment?

Who is financially responsible for a minor child (of any age) that receives treatment by a provider? And is prescribed subsequent medication? This is where these bills ignore parental rights.

These diagnosis' can follow someone their entire life. They are used for hiring and even life insurance purposes. How do you expect a minor at any age to consent to appropriate care? When I was a child they would not see myself or siblings for an evaluation (family hx of BiPolar) because our bodies and brains were not fully developed. None of us have that diagnosis but our behavior during puberty was consistent with typical symptoms. Had we had the access to what this bill entails we could have had a misdiagnosis and been unnecessarily medicated which can be detrimental for developing brains.

In my own care for mental health I have seen a few practitioners. One was such a terrible fit and I made arrangements to be moved to another provider. How do you expect a child to find a practice that meets their needs while also determining if the person they are assigned will be a good fit? This is not ideal especially for children who are naturally people pleasing especially children from trauma backgrounds.

I hope you take the times to consider the maturity and responsibility involved in any form of health care but especially that of mental health care. Parents and caregivers should continue to be the ones to facilitate care for minors.

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