



Impacting Reproductive
Care Worldwide

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Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee
1007 East Grand Avenue Room 116
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

3/1/23

Dear Chair Costello, Vice Chair Edler, and Ranking Member Donahue,

On behalf of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM), I am writing to express strong opposition to [SSB 1197](#) which would curtail the rights of the young people of Iowa and criminalize providers for practicing the standard of medical care.

ASRM is a multidisciplinary organization of nearly 8,000 professionals dedicated to the advancement of the art, science, and practice of reproductive medicine. Distinguished members of ASRM include obstetricians and gynecologists, urologists, reproductive endocrinologists, embryologists, mental health professionals and others.

Young people who identify as transgender are at an increased risk for suicide, depression and anxiety symptoms. Multiple studies have found, that, along with social and familial support, access to gender-affirming care has been shown to reduce suicide ideation and attempts in transgender individuals. Transgender persons may or may not choose to alter their bodies hormonally or surgically. Hormone therapy and gender reassignment surgery, which will change a person's body to conform to their gender identity, is now seen as an effective, safe treatment and is increasingly covered by medical insurance. Research indicates mainly positive outcomes, resulting in relief from gender dysphoria and an improved sense of well-being. Criminalizing providers who offer gender-affirming care will lead to further stigma and violence in the transgender community as well as an exodus of expert medical care from Iowa, as physicians seek states that do not penalize their practice.

In allowing the government to intervene in the sacred relationship between a patient and physician, passing SSB 1197 would only make access to critical



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reproductive and mental health care more difficult and, indeed, dangerous. For these and other reasons, I strongly urge you to oppose the passage of SSB 1197.

For more information, feel free to contact me or Sean Tipton, Chief Advocacy and Policy officer at Stipton@asrm.org or 202-421-5112.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Thomas, MD
President

American Society for Reproductive Medicine