

Chair Kennedy and Members of the House Committee on State, Veteran, and Military Affairs,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Drew Iannuccillo, I'm a public school teacher and I am here today representing the Colorado Trans* Educators Network. Trans educators are growing increasingly visible in our state; we are in schools and teaching children of every age group, every day. We strongly oppose HB20-1144 which would allow parents absolute access to medical records and decisions for children, age 17 and younger, as well as restrict access to education. I am also speaking on behalf of the Colorado Education Association, which opposes the bill.

By limiting the privacy of minors' medical records and school records, this bill threatens harm to some of Colorado's most at-risk children —those who are trans and gender-diverse. The 2015 Healthy Kids Colorado Survey found that 48% of trans high school students had been bullied at school in the past year, 38% had skipped school in the past 4 weeks, and 47% had considered suicide in the past year.

We see these statistics materialized in our classrooms every day.

When young people choose not to bring their parents into a decision they are making about their identity, this is done for self-preservation.

The bill would also restrict access to education, with especially troubling language on page 5, lines 6-13:

6 (c) PROCEDURES BY WHICH A PARENT WHO OBJECTS TO ANY
7 LEARNING MATERIAL OR ACTIVITY ON THE BASIS THAT IT IS HARMFUL MAY
8 WITHDRAW HIS OR HER MINOR CHILD FROM THE ACTIVITY OR FROM THE
9 CLASS OR PROGRAM IN WHICH THE MATERIAL IS USED. AN OBJECTION TO
10 A LEARNING MATERIAL OR ACTIVITY ON THE BASIS THAT IT IS HARMFUL
11 MUST BE AN OBJECTION BASED ON THE BELIEF THAT THE MATERIALS OR
12 ACTIVITIES QUESTION BELIEFS OR PRACTICES IN SEX, MORALITY, OR
13 RELIGION.

Under these rules, a parent would be able to pull their child out of our classes, citing solely the fact that we are openly trans educators. This would erode trust in trans educators as knowledgeable and talented professionals. Our daily presence in schools helps all students learn about diversity, and we serve as invaluable role models for trans and questioning children.

Under these rules, academic content in schools would also be rendered optional. Parents would be able to pull their child out of reading literature by LGBTQ authors, from learning queer and trans history, or from receiving the comprehensive human sexuality education which we know saves lives and improves health outcomes.

The language of the bill would severely restrict our ability to teach, support, and connect with our students. This is why we are in strong opposition to HB20-1144.

Signed,

Colorado Education Association (CEA)

CEA LGBTQ+ Caucus

Anton Schulzki, High School Social Studies Teacher, Colorado Springs School District 11

Nicole Ellis, Third Grade Math and Science Educator, Aurora Public Schools

Matthew Pedregon, Music Teacher, Cherry Creek School District

Aly Nutter, former DPS 6-8th Grade ELD and Spanish teacher

Tanya Muftic, teacher at Community Montessori BVSD, and President of The Tie Tuesday Project, supporting LGBTQ educators, students, and community

Katherine Laidlaw, 6-8th Grade ELD Teacher, Denver Public Schools

Caroline Houser, Middle School Theatre Arts Teacher, Denver Public Schools

Colorado Transgender/Nonbinary Educators Network

Joel Zigman, former Elementary School Music Teacher, Jefferson County Public Schools

Sam Long, High School Science Teacher, Jefferson County Public Schools

Fray Patton, former Middle School Special Education Mathematics Specialist, Denver Public Schools

Rowen Thomas, MA; Independent DEI & Educational Consultant; Former staff member, University of Northern Colorado's Gender & Sexuality Resource Center

Rae Jones, Middle School Science Teacher, Denver Public Schools

Tracy Weber, High School ELD Teacher, STRIVE Prep

Whitten Steele, Denver Public Schools Teacher