

PEDIATRIC ENDOCRINE SOCIETY

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Dear Governor Dennis Daugaard:

As members of the Board of Directors of the Pediatric Endocrine Society, the leading professional society for our specialty in the United States and North America, we respectfully request that you veto HB 1008.

A bill that requires students at state public schools to use restrooms and other facilities based on their “chromosomes and anatomy” at birth not only targets transgender youth and subjects them to the potential for great harm, but is fundamentally flawed, as it is based on the incorrect notion that gender identity is determined by one’s sex chromosomes. As professional experts in the field of chromosomes and genital anatomy, we would like to point out that there are numerous examples where chromosomes and anatomy don’t match: It is well-described in the medical literature that there are some females with an unequivocal female gender identity yet who have the typical XY male chromosomes, and males who clearly identify as males and yet have XX chromosomes, typically seen in females. Thus, there is no evidence to support the notion that gender identity is determined by sex chromosomes.

While gender identity is not determined by which set of chromosomes one happens to have, numerous scientific studies, however, support the concept of biologic underpinnings to gender identity. Simply put, the weight of the scientific data indicates that gender identity – just like sexual orientation-- is not a choice.

Transgender youth represent a misunderstood and vulnerable population. Rigorous research has demonstrated that discrimination and trauma carry a significant risk for negative mental health outcomes in transgender youth, including depression, substance abuse, suicidal ideation and suicide attempts. HB 1008 would subject these vulnerable youth to unnecessary trauma and risk. Anyone who has had the opportunity to work with such youth knows that they merely want to be who they know themselves to be, and to feel safe at school.

Transgender youth need the support of family, school, and community to thrive, as do all young people. The eyes of the country are on South Dakota. Please do not create unnecessary hardship for these vulnerable youth, and please veto HB 1008.

Respectfully,

Pediatric Endocrine Society Board of Directors