

Leading U.S. pediatricians oppose transgender bathroom bill

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(HealthDay)—North Carolina's new transgender bathroom law will harm

already vulnerable children, says a leading group of U.S. pediatricians that wants the law repealed.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) this week joined other professional groups and business leaders in urging repeal of the [law](#), which requires transgender people to use bathrooms and locker rooms that match the gender on their birth certificate.

"As pediatricians, we know firsthand how increasing burdens and barriers for youth who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) can increase their risk of depression, substance abuse, dropping out of school, or suicide," said Dr. Deborah Ainsworth, president of the AAP North Carolina Chapter.

"The law can also have unintentional consequences for [children](#) born with gender-related genetic disorders, children with disabilities who may need a different sex parent to help them in the restroom, and children who find themselves homeless due to lack of support for their gender identities," she added in an academy news release.

The bill signed by North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory in March and similar bills introduced in other states this year fail to meet children's most basic needs of validation and protection, explained Dr. Karen Remley, executive director and chief executive officer of the AAP.

"Pediatricians in North Carolina and across the country know what children need: They need the stability and support of nurturing adults, they need the acceptance and compassion of their peers and community, and they need to feel safe where they live and where they learn," Remley said in the news release.

Such support, said Ainsworth, can buffer all young people—especially LGBT youth—from negative experiences and outcomes while promoting

positive health and well-being.

"We all have a fundamental responsibility to support and nurture children and adolescents to ensure that they can grow and develop into healthy adults," Ainsworth said.

This type of law sends "a distressing message to transgender youth and can worsen the challenges many already face," she concluded.

Transgender teens are already more likely than others to be victims of violence, bullying and harassment, Remley said. The North Carolina law and similar measures elsewhere exacerbate those risks by creating hostile environments for transgender youth, she explained, "all implying the same message: 'You're different, something is wrong with you, you need to change in order to fit in here.'"

"The message some public leaders have chosen is not the message we should be telling transgender children and teens," Remley added.

"The message of the American Academy of Pediatrics to transgender youth is this: We support you, and we will speak up for you. And so today, we do," Remley said. "We urge the governor of North Carolina and all other states considering similar measures to reconsider and repeal these harmful policies, and in so doing, stand up for transgender children."

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on [LGBT health](#).

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