

FAMILY ISSUE FACT SHEET

NO. 2022-03 (FEBRUARY 2022)

SB 1138 STRIKE EVERYTHING AMENDMENT; MINOR GENDER TRANSITION PROCEDURES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Adolescence is a profound time of physical, mental, and emotional change. Children need guidance from adults, including protection from undertaking life-altering and irreversible decisions, before they can fully contemplate the implications.

In recent years, the number of minors seeking gender transition procedures has skyrocketed. Yet little long-term research exists addressing the implications of these procedures on children's brains and bodies. Thus, they should not be encouraged to receive experimental treatments that have permanent consequences, such as leaving them sterile and physically marred for life.

To that end, SB 1138 helps children struggling to embrace their biological sex by protecting them from irreversible and harmful surgeries that forever alter their lives and may increase their risk of suicide. The bill ensures that healthcare providers protect their young patients by precluding them from providing "gender transition" surgeries.

WHY SB 1138 IS NEEDED

Gender transition "reassignment" surgeries have proliferated and mainstreamed in the past decade. Between 2015 and 2016, gender reassignment surgeries overall increased by nearly 20 percent in the United States.ⁱ Now, some healthcare providers are even providing these procedures to minors who are experiencing distress accepting their biological sex.

Arizona is no exception to the trend. Some Arizona clinics and doctors are willing to perform these life-altering surgeries on children, including a prominent one in Scottsdale.ⁱⁱ Also, a lawsuit filed in Arizona District Court names other local doctors who refer minor patients for cross-sex hormones, and admit to agreeing to perform such surgeries on minors.ⁱⁱⁱ

The healthcare industry should not be experimenting on minors. There are few long-term studies showing the effects of gender surgeries on minors. But there are plenty of studies showing the health risks to adults.

The health risks to adults for gender surgeries are alarming as they often irreparably alter or remove biologically healthy reproductive body parts. These surgeries include hysterectomy, genital reconstruction, and penial or breast implants.

There is also a panoply of non-genital gender reassignment surgeries that alter or remove biologically healthy and normal body parts. For biological women, procedures include a subcutaneous mastectomy, voice surgery, liposuction, lipofilling, and pectoral implants. For biological men, these procedures include augmentation mammoplasty, facial feminization

surgery, liposuction, lipofilling, voice surgery, thyroid cartilage reduction, gluteal augmentation, and hair reconstruction.

Taking such risks at a tender age is also unnecessary. Studies confirm at least 80 to 95 percent of children experiencing gender conflict grow comfortable with their biological gender during the course of growing up.^{iv} Yet, if they are subject to surgeries, their bodies will be fundamentally, and likely forever, changed.

WHAT SB 1138 DOES

SB 1138 protects Arizona’s adolescents by prohibiting physicians from providing irreversible “gender reassignment” surgery to minors.

The legislation includes exceptions in cases of medically verifiable disorders of sex development.

TALKING POINTS

- **SB 1138 helps children struggling to embrace their biological sex by protecting them from irreversible and harmful surgery. Teens need real help, not harm.**
- **Minors cannot buy alcohol, cigarettes, vote, get a tattoo, or even buy cough syrup over the counter – they certainly cannot consent to a drastic decision with permanent consequences like an attempted physical gender transformation.**
- **Physicians and clinics in Arizona are already providing gender transition procedures. SB 1138 will protect our children from these experimental and dangerous surgeries.**
- **The best treatment for gender identity conflict has shown to be allowing adolescence to play out naturally. Studies have shown at least 80 to 95 percent of children experiencing gender conflict grow comfortable with their biological gender when left uninterrupted.**
- **Studies have shown that so-called “sex reassignment” surgery does not improve mental health or lower suicide rates among those struggling with gender identity conflict. One major study in Sweden revealed that 10 to 15 years out, the suicide rate of those who had undergone sex reassignment surgery was 20 times that of comparable peers. It found those who undergo so-called “gender reassignment” surgery “have considerably higher risks for mortality, suicidal behavior, and psychiatric morbidity than the general population.”^v**

CONCLUSION

Arizona law should protect young people who struggle to embrace their biological sex from irreversible surgeries during the sensitive years of adolescence. These children deserve real help, not harm.

ⁱ American Society of Plastic Surgeons. (2017, May 22). *Gender Confirmation Surgeries Rise 20% in First Ever Report* [Press Release]. <https://www.plasticsurgery.org/news/press-releases/gender-confirmation-surgeries-rise-20-percent-in-first-ever-report>

ⁱⁱ TransHealthCare. *Dr. Toby Meltzer: Globally Recognized Leader in the Specialty of Gender Surgery*. <https://www.transhealthcare.org/toby-meltzer/>.

ⁱⁱⁱ D. H., et al v. Jami Snyder, No. 21-15668 (9t Cir. June 4, 2021). Complaint available at <https://www.nclrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Complaint.pdf> (last viewed Jan 2022).

^{iv} American College of Pediatricians. (2018, November). *Gender Dysphoria in Children*. <https://acpeds.org/position-statements/gender-dysphoria-in-children>.

^v Dhejne, C., Lichtenstein, P., Boman, M., Johansson, A. L. V., Långström, N., Landén, M. (2011). Long-Term Follow-up of Transsexual Persons Undergoing Sex Reassignment Surgery: Cohort Study in Sweden, PLoS ONE 6(2): e16885. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0016885