

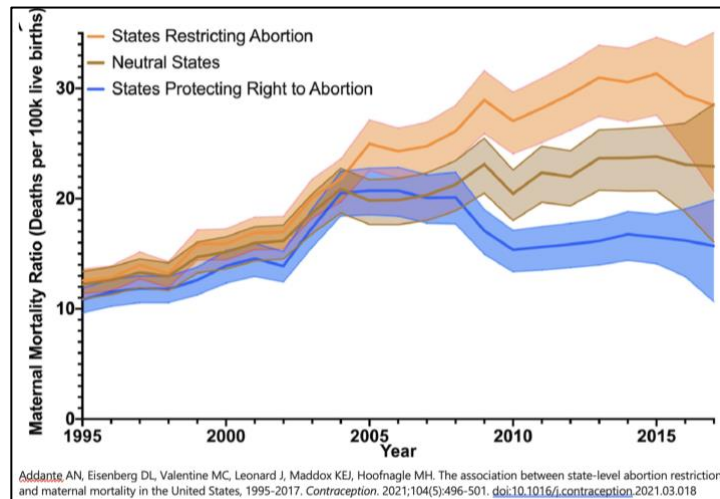
Dear Committee on Government Administration and Elections,

I am a pediatrician who works in New Haven and Advocacy Chair for the CT-American Academy of Pediatrics Chapter.

These are my personal views and do not reflect those of my employer.

**I am writing to support SJ RESOLUTION PROPOSING A STATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT CONCERNING DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF SEX UNDER THE EQUAL PROTECTION CLAUSE.**

The American Academy of Pediatrics advocates for adolescents to have access to comprehensive, confidential reproductive healthcare which includes [contraception](#), [emergency contraception](#), [abortion care](#), and [testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections](#). It is critical that clinics, hospitals and pharmacies do not inhibit access to this essential medical care. When there are [barriers to accessing contraception](#), there are increased rates of unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions, maternal deaths, pregnancy complications, and maternal mental health challenges. [When abortion care is restricted](#), there are higher maternal mortality rates (image).



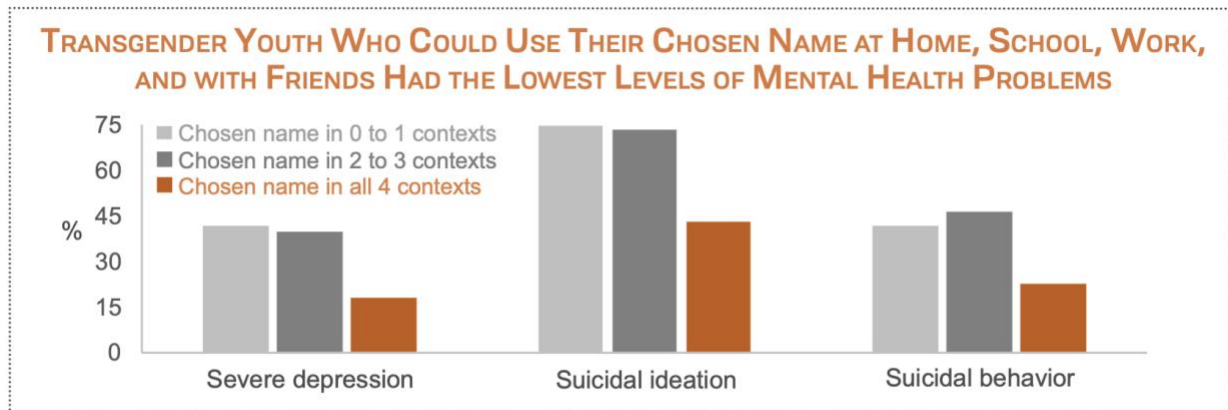
It is vital to [maintain confidential access to comprehensive reproductive care including abortion care](#) for adolescents as mandatory parental disclosure can lead to delays in obtaining needed medical care, limited treatment options, family discord, and safety concerns. It is also essential to ensure [confidential access to testing and treatment](#) for sexually transmitted infections for adolescents because when a [confidential environment is maintained](#), youth are more likely to disclose medical concerns and access needed medical care regarding sexual and reproductive health.

**Uninhibited access to comprehensive, confidential reproductive healthcare is critical for the health and wellbeing of Connecticut adolescents.**

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The American Academy of Pediatrics advocates for access to [comprehensive, developmentally appropriate gender-affirming care](#). As with any medical condition, the treatment plan is based on patient and family preferences, symptoms experienced, disease severity, and careful consideration of the risks and benefits of intervention.

Access to gender-affirming care can be a lifesaving measure for [transgender or gender diverse youth](#). Research has shown that [transgender youth are at increased risk of multiple mental health disorders](#) including depression, anxiety, eating disorders, self-harm, and suicide. Research has also shown that when youth receive gender-affirming care, there is a [decrease in mental health disorders](#) such as depression and suicide (image). When transgender youth do not have access to gender-affirming care, there are negative health consequences.



Russell, S.T., Pollitt, A.M., Li, G. & Grossman, A.H. (2018). Transgender youth allowed to use their chosen name have fewer mental health problems. *PRC Research Brief* 3(7). DOI: 10.15781/T21Z4299R.

**Access to comprehensive, developmentally appropriate gender-affirming care is critical for the health and wellbeing of Connecticut children.**

Thank you for considering my testimony. Please reach out with questions.

**Molly Markowitz, MD FAAP**

Chair, Advocacy Committee

CT American Academy of Pediatrics Chapter

Email: [molly.markowitz@yale.edu](mailto:molly.markowitz@yale.edu)

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