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SRCD Governing Council Denounces Texas Anti-Trans Directive, Urges Policymakers to Look at Evidence

As developmental scientists and professionals, we support age-appropriate, evidence-based standards of care for transgender youth. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton recently issued a new interpretation of state law that says that providing youth with certain types of gender affirming medical care is child abuse. Subsequently, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott followed with a directive emphasizing the duty of licensed professionals who have direct contact with children – including doctors, nurses, and teachers – as well as members of the public – to report suspected instances of minors receiving gender affirming care or face criminal penalties. The statement further directs the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and other state agencies to investigate parents of these children.

This directive is part of a disturbing trend in state legislation across the United States that would harm the health and well-being of more than forty-five thousand transgender and non-binary children and youth. While these legislative efforts are varied, we see them as consistently rooted in longstanding bias and discrimination against transgender people, and directly counters research and ethical, medical practice of licensed professionals.

As noted in SRCD's earlier statement, transgender children and youth are already at heightened risk for experiencing violence and harassment. Research indicates that transgender and nonbinary children and youth are more vulnerable to depression, anxiety, and engaging in self-harm, including suicide, than their cisgender peers.

Transphobic policies and practices run counter to research that documents the positive impacts of gender-affirming health care, supportive communities, and protective school policies for transgender children and youth. Their access to, and use of, evidence-based, affirming medical and social interventions improve their health and development and reduce their long-term psychological risks, including the risk of suicide. Policies and practices that exacerbate environments for transgender children, youth, and their caregivers – such as the directive by Governor Abbott - have the potential of leading to greater harassment, mental distress, and increases in suicidality.

The Society for Research in Child Development is committed to advancing developmental science and promoting its use to improve human lives. **Developmental science makes clear that access to medical services and supportive gender-affirming environments benefit the health and wellbeing of transgender children and youth.**

We urge policymakers to refer to SRCD's *Statement of the Evidence Brief* on gender-affirming care to learn more about the developmental evidence and its important implications for policymaking.

Please see additional resources:

- Statement of the Evidence: Gender-Affirming Policies Support Transgender and Gender Diverse Youth's Health
- SRCD Statement in Support of Transgender and Gender Diverse Children and Youth
- [Webinar] A Discussion on Anti Trans Legislation Implications for Researchers, Practitioners, and Other Adults, Society for Research in Adolescence
- APA president condemns Texas governor's directive to report parents of transgender minors, American Psychological Association