

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Targeting Trans Kids Diverts DFPS Resources from Those who Really Need Help
—Many are Kids with Disabilities**

August 11, 2022 (Austin, Texas)—In 2018, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reported 5.2% of school-aged children have a disability.ⁱ In January 2022, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) reported 53% of children in DFPS care have at least one type of disability.ⁱⁱ These numbers illustrate that Texas has a problem with kids with disabilities being abused at an inflated, disproportionate, and harrowing rate. Despite this urgency, children with and without disabilities who need help from Texas DFPS are facing unnecessary delays.

On February 22, 2022, Governor Greg Abbott, based on a non-binding legal opinion issued by Attorney General Ken Paxton, proclaimed gender-affirming care for transgender youth to be child abuse.ⁱⁱⁱ Members of the public and professionals licensed by the state of Texas who interact with children are now required, under the threat of criminal penalty and loss of licensure, to report any minors suspected of receiving gender-affirming healthcare to DFPS for investigation.^{iv v vi}

This means markedly less resources and assistance going towards vulnerable children in real abusive and neglectful situations, and the thousands of children already in the Texas foster care system. Here's why:

Investigators are resigning in response to Governor Abbott's directive, with more resignations projected on the horizon.^{vii} By early April 2022, 10% of Austin's 70 CPS investigators had already resigned.^{viii} They are resigning because the Governor's directive is counter to the current standard of care for minors experiencing gender dysphoria (social transition, puberty blockers, and hormone replacement therapy), which is supported by every major medical and psychiatric association in the nation.^{ix x} Overworked and undercompensated, the DFPS investigators who remain are seeing a doubling of new caseloads from: having to pick up the caseloads from investigators who have resigned, and the sudden influx of new cases resulting from reports on trans children and teens.^{xi}

While DFPS is under the purview of the Texas executive branch, and the Governor appoints its commissioner, the agency itself gets to determine how it will operate.^{xii} The Coalition for Texans with Disabilities urges Texas DFPS to align itself with its core mission and to focus its efforts to address the real abuse and neglect that so many Texas children are facing every day.

Families supporting their trans children under the guidance of a physician, and the robust backing of evidence-based care, should not be a target population for DFPS. Doing so traumatizes these children, worsens their physical and mental health, and diverts precious resources away from kids who really need help.

That's how kids who really need DFPS intervention become collateral damage to what many say is culture war politics.

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About CTD

Founded in 1978, CTD is the largest and oldest member-driven cross disability organization in the state. We focus on state-level governmental advocacy, professional disability consulting, consumer direction, and public awareness activities (primarily in the arts) to make Texas a leader in public policy and culture related to people with disabilities of all ages. Learn more about CTD's work at: www.TXDisabilities.org.

ⁱ Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau. (2018). *The Risk and Prevention of Maltreatment of Children with Disabilities*. Child Welfare Information Gateway.

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubpdfs/focus.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. (2022). *January 2022*. [Data set].

<https://www.dfps.state>

[.tx.us/Doing_Business/Regional_Statistics/documents/FY22/2022-01_Regional_Statistics.xlsx](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Doing_Business/Regional_Statistics/documents/FY22/2022-01_Regional_Statistics.xlsx)

ⁱⁱⁱ Abbott, Greg. (2022, February 22). *Greg Abbott to Jaime Masters, February 22, 2022*. [Letter]. Office of the Texas Governor. <https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/press/O-MastersJaime202202221358.pdf>

^{iv} Ibid.

^v Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. (n.d.). *When and How to Report Child Abuse*.

https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Child_Safety/report_abuse.asp

^{vi} Dey, Sneha. (2022, March 22). Texas health providers are suspending gender-affirming care for teens in response to GOP efforts. *Texas Tribune*. <https://www.texastribune.org/2022/03/22/texas-transgender-teenagers-medical-care/>

^{vii} Klibanoff, Eleanor. (2022, April 11). Distraught over orders to investigate trans kids' families, Texas child welfare workers are resigning. *Texas Tribune*. <https://www.texastribune.org/2022/04/11/texas-trans-child-abuse-investigations/>

^{viii} Nowlin, Sanford. (2022, April 8). Texas child welfare workers quitting over governor's order to investigate families with transgender kids. *San Antonio Current*. <https://www.sacurrent.com/news/texas-child-welfare-workers-quitting-over-governors-order-to-investigate-families-with-transgender-kids-28610524>

^{ix} Texas Counseling Association. (2022, March 1). *Mental Health and Child Welfare Stakeholders Remain Committed to Supporting Gender Affirming Care*.

https://www.txca.org/docs/MH_Child_Welfare_AG_Statement_March_2022_FINAL.pdf

^x Klibanoff, Eleanor. (2022, April 11).

^{xi} Ibid.

^{xii} McGaughy, Lauren. (2022, May 13). Texas Supreme Court says governor cannot order trans child abuse investigations. *The Dallas Morning News*.

<https://www.dallasnews.com/news/politics/2022/05/13/texas-supreme-court-says-governor-cannot-order-trans-child-abuse-investigations/>