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More Than 100 Criminal Justice Leaders Tell Texas Court that Attacks on Trans Kids and Their Families Threaten Public Safety

Current and Former Elected Prosecutors, Attorneys General and Law Enforcement Leaders File Amicus Brief Arguing that Efforts by Texas Governor and DFPS to Limit Gender-Affirming Care Threatens Lives and Undermines Public Safety

Today, a group of 105 criminal justice leaders from around the nation – including current and former prosecutors, law enforcement leaders and attorneys general, and former Department of Justice officials and judges – filed an [amicus brief](#) in the Court of Appeals for the Third District of Texas in *PFLAG v. Greg Abbott*. The brief supports efforts to block the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) from following a directive issued by Governor Greg Abbott to investigate and potentially criminalize parents who seek gender-affirming care for their transgender children.

The signatories argue that DFPS' adoption of a new rule requiring the investigation of parents, licensed professionals, and even the general public for potential child abuse following any reported gender-affirming treatment will put vulnerable young people at even greater risk. This deeply disturbing policy undermines public trust in the integrity of the justice system, which makes all communities less safe.

“State leaders cannot claim to care about public safety and parental choice if they use limited taxpayer resources to target kids simply for being their most authentic selves and potentially criminalize parents who seek life-affirming care for their children. The Texas agencies carrying out Governor Abbott’s cruel directive will do nothing but put young people’s lives in danger and create deep distrust of government and the justice system, all in furtherance of a misguided and divisive political agenda. To uphold such a policy would undermine the rule of law and public safety, and needlessly tear families apart,” said **Miriam Krinsky, Executive Director of [Fair and Just Prosecution](#)**, the organizer of the brief, and a former federal prosecutor.

“Weaponizing the criminal justice system against trans children and the people who care about them will have devastating effects on both families and communities. Our leaders should be fortifying the integrity of institutions and the justice system, not undermining the rule of law and the protections it should offer,” said **former U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Alabama Joyce Vance**, a signatory to the brief.

The signatories emphasize in the brief the chilling effect the DFPS rule will have: “The Appellants’ targeting of transgender children and their families...isolates these particularly vulnerable individuals from the protection of the criminal legal system. Transgender children are already more likely than their cisgender peers to be victims of violence and harassment. If transgender children and their families know that the police, teachers, and school officials can seek to file abuse reports against them simply for utilizing critical medical care, they will be significantly less likely to seek help or redress when they become the victims of crime. Their effective lack of access to law enforcement will only exacerbate the potential for violence and abuse.”

“As an elected prosecutor, I have an obligation to pursue justice and use the limited resources of my office to best serve my community. There is no justice to be found in targeting parents who provide potentially life-saving medical care to their children. At a time when law enforcement should be building trust with the people we serve, this will only make it harder to keep people safe,” said **Wyandotte County, Kan. District Attorney Mark Dupree**, a signatory to the brief.

“As a law enforcement leader, I rely on the cooperation of my community to promote public safety, but when the power of the government is used for political attacks on children and their loving parents, people lose faith in the institutions meant to keep us safe and are less likely to come forward as crime witnesses and victims,” said **Washtenaw County, Mich. Sheriff Jerry Clayton**, a signatory to the brief.

Signatories include **Attorneys General Kathy Jennings** (Delaware) and **Ellen Rosenblum** (Oregon); **former Solicitor General Seth Waxman**; current law enforcement leaders including **Chief Abdul D. Pridgen** (San Leandro, Calif.) and **Sheriffs Jerry L. Clayton** (Washtenaw County, Mich.), **Kristin Graziano** (Charleston County, S.C.), **Garry L. McFadden** (Mecklenburg County, N.C.), **Charmaine McGuffey** (Hamilton County, Ohio) and **Steven Tompkins** (Suffolk County, Mass.); **former Police Chiefs Richard Biehl, RaShall Brackney, Joseph Brann, Jim Bueermann, Chris Burbank, Brendan Cox, William Lansdowne, Norm Stamper, Darrel Stephens and Scott Thomson**; **former U.S. Attorneys David J. Hickton, Karen Loeffler, Barbara McQuade, Jerome O’Neill, Richard Pocker, Joyce Vance and William Wilmoth**; and **former judges Nancy Gertner** (U.S. District Court, Massachusetts), **Howard Matz** (U.S. District Court, Central District of California), **William Royal Furgeson, Jr.** (U.S. District Court, Western District of Texas), **Steven Kirkland** (Harris County, Texas 334th District Court) and **Michol O’Connor** (Court of Appeals for First Judicial District of Texas), among others.

The *amicus* brief was prepared with the assistance and representation of R. Alan York and Omar J. Alaniz from **Reed Smith LLP** and Amalia Y. Sax-Bolder, Martha L. Fitzgerald and Craig M. Finger from **Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck LLP**.

Read the brief [here](#); for a full list of *amici*, see below.

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Fair and Just Prosecution is a national network of elected prosecutors working towards common-sense, compassionate criminal justice reforms. To learn more about FJP’s work, visit our [website](#) and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

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