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July 1, 2021

The Honorable Greg Abbott  
Governor of the State of Texas  
P.O. Box 12428  
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Governor Abbott:

On January 25, 2021, the Texas Ethics & Religious Liberty Committee (TERLC) of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention (SBTC) sent you a letter defining our legislative priorities for the 87<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session which are important to our Convention and thousands of churches across Texas. We are thankful for what was accomplished for religious liberty, life, orphan and foster care, human trafficking, added transparency in education, visitation rights for loved ones in various care facilities, ensuring there was no expansion of gambling, and other legislative achievements.

However, as you know, the attacks against our Judeo-Christian heritage, traditional family, and children have been relentless. As we face an increasingly hostile environment from Washington, D.C., as well as the educational system and media, we are at an important point in history where delay to act would only bring harm to the next generation. We support your call for a special session in July since there were many critical issues that died before the regular session ended. We know if Texas leads, it will not only impact Texas for good but the rest of the nation as well.

In accordance with our Legislative Priorities, we urge you to place the following on the special session call:

\*Ban on Gender Reassignment Surgeries/Child Genital Mutilation and Puberty-Blocking Drugs/Hormones - On April 6, 2021, Arkansas became the first state to prohibit doctors from providing gender transition procedures for children and over a dozen other states are considering similar prohibitions.

The legislation, known as the [Arkansas Save Adolescents from Experimentation \(SAFE\) Act](#), prohibits any physician or other healthcare professional from providing gender transition procedures, puberty-blocking drugs and cross-sex hormones to any person under the age of 18. It also prohibits public funds from being given directly or indirectly to any doctor, hospital, or other entity that provides gender transition services for minors.



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The proliferation of gender clinics in America, with a reported 17 pediatric gender clinics right here in Texas and serving children as young as 4 years old, as well as transgender ideology in media and many schools teaching this through the vehicle of mental health or social emotional learning programs, has resulted in an environment in which children are many times encouraged to explore alternative genders and identities.

Starting children on experimental processes of “social transitioning” followed by puberty-blocking drugs is child abuse, especially when strong evidence has shown that most gender distressed children, if not transitioned and affirmed during childhood, will grow up to accept their sex at birth and cease to experience gender dysphoria later in life.

Every child is created in the image of God with His determined sex of male or female at birth. Allowing children to make these life-altering changes, as well as allowing adults to assist in this is not only morally wrong but also carries many consequences for their physical and mental health such as bone density problems, fertility/sterility issues and even suicide.

Children must be saved from a lifetime of regret, sterility, and confusion. There are numerous testimonies of adults who underwent transition procedures as children but regret it now. We must stop providers from being allowed to profit off our children and perform these harmful gender reassignment procedures and puberty blocking hormones. Texas must act now to protect our children.

\*The Texas Health Care Conscience Act - As our health care professionals provide quality health care to their patients, their deeply held convictions must be protected along with their right to conscientiously object to a medical procedure that violates their ethical, moral, or religious beliefs.

\*The Fair Play in Women’s Sports Act - As biological males are entering women’s sporting competitions, our daughters are being robbed of these opportunities. Florida, Alabama, Arkansas, Idaho, Mississippi, Tennessee, and West Virginia, have all enacted bans that prohibit transgender women and girls from playing on women’s sports teams. Texas must do the same. A majority of the House and Senate supported this legislation, as there should be no reason to not protect women and young girls.

\*Abolition of Abortion – a complete ban on remaining elective abortions in Texas.



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We know there are many pressing needs in Texas still needing to be addressed such as election integrity, reforming state and local overreach during a pandemic/declared emergency, needed tax relief, educational choice and freedom for families, and securing our electric grid and our borders. We ask that our government officials and policy makers also support public policies that recognize the unalterable God-given distinctions between male and female, and especially protect children under the age of 18 from surgical or pharmaceutical efforts to change their physiological nature. Please help us in protecting our children and grant needed conscience protections to our health care providers as well.

Please know we will be praying for you and feel free to contact us for further discussion.

God bless you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nathan Lorick". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "N" and "L".

Dr. Nathan Lorick  
Executive Director, SBTC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cindy Asmussen". The signature is cursive and elegant, with a large initial "C".

Cindy Asmussen  
TX Ethics & Religious Liberty Advisor