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## **Florida Governor DeSantis Is Violating Students' Right to Privacy, Says Attorney General Brown in Letter** *Coalition of 16 Attorneys General Condemns DeSantis' Request for Information on Public University Students Seeking Gender-Affirming Care*

**BALTIMORE, MD (March 3, 2023)** – Maryland Attorney General Anthony G. Brown expressed grave concern over Florida Governor Ron DeSantis' request for information about Florida public university students receiving gender-affirming care. In a [letter](#) to Governor DeSantis, a coalition of 16 Attorneys General caution that his request for this information will intimidate university administrators, health care providers, staff, and students and could prevent them from providing or accessing necessary, and often lifesaving, medical care. The Attorneys General also have a strong interest in protecting the rights of the many students and staff members in the Florida state university system who are residents of their respective states.

Citing federal protections against discrimination in accessing health care and proven links between the denial of gender-affirming care and negative health outcomes such as substance abuse, depression, anxiety, and suicidality, Attorney General Brown and other coalition members urge Governor DeSantis to immediately rescind his request for private health information.

"Governor DeSantis' request for students' private gender-affirming care information is discriminatory," said Attorney General Brown. "Collecting this information appears to be paving the way for the Governor to unconstitutionally target and limit the programs that these individuals rely on for healthcare and well-being."

In January 2023, Governor DeSantis released a survey asking Florida state universities for information on the number and ages of students seeking gender-affirming care or treatment for gender dysphoria. This private information could be used to eliminate funding for necessary gender-affirming care for transgender students. Governor DeSantis has recently taken similar actions limiting health care access for transgender youth, such as cutting Medicaid funding for gender-affirming care and calling on the Florida Board of Medicine to prohibit the use of puberty blockers for people under 18.

These actions not only jeopardize the health and safety of young people and their families and ignore widely accepted medical standards, but they also unjustly insert the state into the private

relationship between care provider and patient. In the past year, nearly 1 in 5 transgender and non-binary youth attempted suicide, compared with 1 in 10 cisgender youth. Targeting the healthcare that transgender students rely on violates students' rights to equal protection under the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution, as well as their right to freedom from discrimination in federally funded education institutions under Title IX.

In the letter, the Attorneys General pledge their commitment to guaranteeing full equality and dignity for transgender individuals and assert that Governor DeSantis' unjustified request for this information risks the lives and welfare of students and staff in the Florida state university system. Transgender young people are among the most vulnerable populations in the country, and transgender individuals of all ages already face steep barriers to obtaining basic health care. The Attorneys General also note there is strong medical consensus that improving access to gender-affirming care saves lives and urge Governor DeSantis to rescind his information request without delay.

Joining Attorney General Brown in signing the letter are the Attorneys General of Arizona, California, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Nevada, New Mexico, and Washington.

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2023/030323.pdf>