

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Human Services  
For HB 4905

Compiled on: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 10:01 PM

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Hearing Date: April 18, 2023 8:00 AM

Kaitlin Brown, Mrs.

Self

Cleburne, TX

As a foster parent the word neglect is so much more than just physical abuse. Children are often abused emotionally and mentally just as bad if not worse than they are physically. There needs to be a redefinition of the word neglect immediately. Kids that need to be removed are not and in turn stay in a home where the abuse increases exponentially. Please as a foster parent, advocate for children in foster care and a family that sees in the in and outs of the system. It's time there is a redefinition of the word neglect. Children deserve a place to heal and parents deserve time to find healing to so they can hopefully be reunified with one another, but that can't happen if we don't change the word neglect to a more realistic standard, sadly.

Chris Donofrio

Self /Transgender rights advocate

The Woodlands, TX

I oppose HB 4905.

I urge you to kill it in committee.

This is not the appropriate bill for today's children.

Why? Because it plans to hold parents accountable for"

"the parent or legal guardian has exhausted all reasonable means available to the parent or legal guardian to obtain mental health services to meet the child 's needs;

(2) The department is able to provide the services necessary to meet the child 's mental health needs;

(3) The department has identified an available licensed placement for the child that can meet the child 's mental health needs" (page 2, lines 4-11)

HB 1686 just passed out of committee, despite being strongly opposed: 3,000 opposed vs. 97 supporting. I came to testify against that bill.

That bill nullifies the 'all reasonable means available" noted above.

This places an undue and unachievable burden upon parents.

The state should never be able to require something undoable only because it passes another law creating the undoable situation.

Yes, mental health is a critically important part of gender-affirming care.

Something that will be need more than ever if HB 1686 becomes law, and if HB 4905 joins it.

I oppose HB 4905.

Please kill it in committee.

Respectfully,

Chris J. Donofrio

Cecilia Wood, Esq.

self- attorney/lobbyist

Austin, TX

Representative Campos, Thank you for this bill to assist parents who find themselves with the resources to obtain necessary mental health treatment for their children. I would ask that you consider changes to address two issues. First, the bill requires the parents to pay higher child support than other parents. Not only does it no reference the guidelines but it requires the parents to pay for the medical bills. I would imagine that many of these parents are part of the working poor. They don't have Medicaid for their children and they don't have insurance through their employment. If they could afford healthcare they would not have to get CPS involved. I would suggest that child support would be scaled to the parents' income. Second I would suggest that there be a provision that prohibits CPS from removing a child based on the mental health issue that prompted the parent to seek appropriate care for the child before a tragedy occurs. I have not had that happen to any of my clients recently but I understand that practice occurs in places throughout the state. We want parents to reach out before the state is forced to intervene or the child becomes a danger to themselves or others. CPS should be mandated to pursue this process only as you have detailed. One additional note: Parents who reach out for assistance in this often have other children in the home that also need to protect, which prompts the need for assistance. Again, thank you for taking action to improve and clarify this law.