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**Via Email**

Kristen Clarke  
Assistant Attorney General  
U.S. Department of Justice  
Civil Rights Division  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Assistant Attorney General Clarke:

Like many Americans, we are alarmed and disgusted by Texas Governor Gregg Abbot's order to treat gender-affirming care for transgender adolescents as child abuse. We write to respectfully request that the Department of Justice investigate his action as a violation of federal civil rights law.

Gender-affirming treatment, like any other health care, is medical care that helps trans children grow up healthy and happy. It is not child abuse. In fact, the American Medical Association has reported that *every major medical association* in the United States recognizes the medical necessity of transition-related care for improving the physical and mental health of transgender people. The fact that the governor would seek to separate a child from their parents based on treatment that is so widely recommended by medical experts speaks to his fundamental misunderstanding of this issue.

The real harm to transgender youth lies in the bullying and ostracizing that they face for being branded as "different". The CDC has reported that trans youth face a higher risk of various harms including violence victimization, substance use, and suicide. A survey by the American Academy of Pediatrics found that *more than half* of surveyed transgender male teens reported attempting suicide. Misguided and cynical government actions like Mr. Abbott's order are more likely to increase the bullying, alienation, and despair that trans youth experience – not make them safer. Moreover, Mr. Abbott's order will diminish protections for at-risk children because it will force agencies to shift resources away from investigating *actual* child abuse cases.

The governor's order is wrong on many levels. We also believe that his actions are potentially unlawful and warrant an investigation by your agency. Calling for the investigation, and potential separation, of transgender youth and their parents for seeking out doctor-recommended medical treatment may violate the Equal Protection Clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment and run afoul of protections against discrimination under federal statutes, such as Title IX and Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act.

Federal civil rights laws have long served as a critical bulwark against various forms of discrimination. We ask that you continue the laws' legacy of protecting those experiencing discrimination by investigating Mr. Abbott's actions.

Sincerely,



Letitia James

### **Supporting Organizations**

African Services Committee  
BAAD! The Bronx Academy of Arts  
and Dance  
Brooklyn Community Pride Center  
Callen-Lorde Community Health Center  
CNY Pride  
Day One  
Destination Tomorrow: The Bronx  
LGBTQ+ Center  
The Door  
Empire Justice Center, Rochester  
Evergreen Health  
Hetrick-Martin Institute for LGBTQIA+  
Youth  
Gender Equality New York  
The HIV League  
Hollaback!  
Housing Works  
In Our Own Voices, Inc.  
Lambda Independent Democrats of  
Brooklyn

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual &  
Transgender Community Center  
The LOFT: LGBTQ+ Community  
Center  
The Marsha P. Johnson Institute  
National Latina Institute for  
Reproductive Justice  
The NEW Pride Agenda  
Planned Parenthood Empire State Acts  
Pride Center of Western New York  
SAGE  
SAGE Upstate  
Spectrum Transgender Group of  
Western New York  
Stonewall Democratic Club  
Stonewall Democrats of Western New  
York