

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2024-XXXX

TITLE: Resolution Advocating for Reduced Cost Hormone Replacement Therapy at the Student Health Care Center

AUTHOR(S): Senator Arturo Zárrate

SPONSORS: Young Democratic Socialists of America Syd Engstrom, Young Democratic Socialists of America Chair Gabriel Vasquez, Young Democratic Socialists of America Treasurer Meir Schochet, Young Democratic Socialists of America Membership Director Max Kappalman, Minority Party Leader Nathaniel Pelton, Senator Daniel Permane, Senator Anamika Naidu, Senator Sarah Hoffer, Senator Allan Rivera Jaramillo, Senator Meagan Lamey, Senator Hunter Monson, Senator Chalisa Budhai, Senator Isha Khan, Senator Anghelo Gangano, Senator Elizabeth Insuasti, Senator Caitlyn Mathews, Senator Simone Liang, Senator Raj Mia, Senator Vivian Phung, Senator Antonio Hendricks, Senator Zoe Richter, Baking4Wellness Treasurer Oscar Santiago Perez, Pride Student Union President Jonathan Chance Stephens

WHEREAS, transgender individuals “experience significant disparities in mental health and wellbeing compared to the general population,” due to stigmatization, discrimination, and other stressors related to gender identity and/or gender dysphoria [1]; and,

WHEREAS, gender dysphoria, “a deep sense of unease and distress that may occur when your biological sex does not match your gender identity,” is a cause of “severe discomfort, anxiety, depression, and other mental health conditions” for transgender individuals[2]; and,

WHEREAS, transgender individuals experiencing gender dysphoria use different methods to align their gender identity with their gender expression, and to improve their overall mental health and wellbeing; and,

WHEREAS, these methods can include hormone replacement therapy (HRT), among a variety of options; and,

WHEREAS, transgender individuals have exhibited a marked increase in mental health when undergoing hormone replacement therapy, which is a type of gender-affirming hormone therapy, that aligns with their gender identity and expression [2, 3]; and,

WHEREAS, hormone replacement therapy can be costly, causing young economically disadvantaged transgender individuals a financial burden, forcing them to choose between either their mental or financial health[4]; and,

WHEREAS, the United States Center for Disease Control categorizes hormone replacement therapy as healthcare[2], thereby placing it under the jurisdiction of the Student Health Care Center; and,

WHEREAS, the Student Health Care Center is able to provide gender-affirming healthcare to students, including but not limited to hormone replacement therapy for transgender and gender-diverse individuals; and,

WHEREAS, currently, the Student Health Care Center employs only one specialist dedicated to gender-affirming healthcare, that being Ann Grooms[5], who must serve an entire campus of gender-diverse students; and,

WHEREAS, it is unacceptable to have a single specialist working to serve thousands of people in a specialized area of healthcare; and,

WHEREAS, these communities could be better served by a wider variety of healthcare options, which would let potential patients have a selection of healthcare providers who might better match their values and interests[6]; and,

WHEREAS, the efficacy of gender-affirming healthcare initiatives, including hormone replacement therapy, should be measured to ensure that these services effectively meet the needs of transgender and gender-diverse students; and,

WHEREAS, benchmarks for the success of expanded gender-affirming healthcare services can include increased access to hormone replacement therapy, improved student mental health and wellbeing metrics, and enhanced participation in academic and extracurricular activities; and,

WHEREAS, limited access to gender affirming care such as hormone replacement therapy threatens the wellbeing of transgender students at the University of Florida by restricting imperative medical treatments necessary for transgender individuals to correctly express their gender identity, and;

WHEREAS, a study spearheaded by Stanford University asserted that, “odds of severe psychological distress were reduced by 222%, 153% and 81% for those who began hormones in early adolescence, late adolescence and adulthood ... compared with the control group,” [7, 8] meaning that the mental health of transgender individuals is severely benefitted by these treatments; and,

WHEREAS, a study found that there was “a disadvantage among binary transgender youth, relative to cisgender youth, in high math course attainment and postsecondary enrollment,” which could be helped by gender-affirming treatment, such as hormone replacement therapy[2, 9]; and,

WHEREAS, transgender individuals receiving hormone replacement therapy would therefore be able to flourish more in life with better healthcare, improving their mental health and thereby allowing them to better participate in academics, extracurriculars, and social events[3, 9]; and,

WHEREAS, transgender individuals undergoing hormone replacement therapy are better able to participate in academics, extracurriculars, and social events, and thus are able to contribute more to student life at the University of Florida[2, 3, 9]; and,

WHEREAS, these individuals would better benefit the University of Florida by being more involved in student life, thereby increasing the University’s outreach, prestige, and positive influence on its students[2, 3, 9]; then,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes the need for increased standards for gender-affirming healthcare at the Student Health Care Center.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate calls on the Student Health Care Center to increase the amount of specialists dedicated to gender-affirming care to at least three.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate advocates for the implementation of a comprehensive evaluation mechanism in partnership with the Center for Inclusion and Multicultural Engagement's Office of LGBTQ+ Student Engagement to monitor the impact of increased gender-affirming healthcare services on transgender students' health, academic performance, and campus life engagement.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that this evaluation mechanism should include anonymous self-reported pre- and post-accessibility surveys, anonymous self-reported mental health outcome tracking, and anonymous self-reported academic and extracurricular participation metrics to verify the impact and success of this initiative.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the results of this evaluation should be reported annually to the Student Senate of the University of Florida, the Student Health Care Center, and the Office of LGBTQ+ Student Engagement in order to inform ongoing adjustments and enhancements to the healthcare services provided, thereby ensuring they continue to meet the evolving needs of gender-diverse students effectively.

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate endorses the allocation of Student Government reserve transfer funds to secure reduced-care gender-affirming healthcare at the Student Health Care Center to better serve this university's community, which will be specified in the future.

Proviso: The author of this bill would like to recognize YDSA Co-Chair Syd Engstrom for assisting in the authoring of this bill. A copy of this resolution shall be sent to Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, Board of Trustees Chair Mori Hosseini, University President Ben Sasse, Vice President of Student Life Heather White, Interim Provost Scott Angle, Student Health Care Center Director Jocelyn Gravlee, Student Health Care Center Pediatrician Ann Grooms, LGBTQ+ Student Engagement Director Jamir Wright, Ronin Lupien, and Senator Arturo Zárrate.

[1] <https://www.lgbtqihealtheducation.org/publication/medical-care-of-trans-and-gender-diverse-adults-2021/>

[2] <https://ufhealth.org/conditions-and-treatments/gender-dysphoria>

[3] <https://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment-guidelines/trans.html>

[4] <https://www.sdlgbtn.com/the-cost-of-hormone-therapy-for-transgender-individuals/>

[5] <https://ufhealth.org/doctors/ann-m-grooms/bio#my-bio>

[6] <https://bmcmededuc.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12909-020-1963-6>

[7] <https://med.stanford.edu/news/all-news/2022/01/mental-health-hormone-treatment-transgender-people.html>

[8] <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0261039>

[9] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8483182/>