

Freedom Oklahoma Statement on Passage of SB 3: Oklahoma Legislative ARPA Fund Stipulations to Ban Best Practice Medical Care

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OKLAHOMA CITY - Today, the Oklahoma Legislature passed SB 3, effectively eliminating access to gender-affirming healthcare for Oklahoma minors. SB 3 forces OU Health Facilities to end best practice medical care for trans youth as a stipulation to receive American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. In response, Freedom Oklahoma issued the following statement:

The following is attributable to Nicole McAfee, Executive Director of Freedom Oklahoma:

“Our communities are exhausted by the endless attacks on our autonomy, privacy, and right to live as our full, authentic selves. Today’s passage of SB 3 proves yet again politicians in the Oklahoma Legislature are more concerned with personal, political ambitions than they are with the health and well-being of Oklahomans. These ARPA funds were intended as an investment in the expansion of OU Health Facilities’ behavioral health programs. Instead, they will be used to discriminate on the basis of gender, excluding some of our most vulnerable youth from receiving life-saving care. It’s an appalling piece of legislation that, given its emergency clause, is purposefully exacerbating real and immediate harm. The legislators who voted in favor of SB 3 are not pediatric medical professionals, they are not in community with trans youth, and remain willfully ignorant to the best practice standards for gender-affirming care. 2SLGBTQ+ Oklahomans deserve so much better.”

“SB 3 also stands to drive even more care providers from our state. Medical professionals deserve to be trusted to do their jobs, but this law undermines them and their critical work. Trans youth and their families deserve the safety to seek appropriate care, but SB 3 violates their autonomy and their right to best-practice medical care. The Oklahoma legislature is setting a terrifying precedent where a few, uniformed folks determine the funding streams and accessibility of specific medical procedures they deem ‘morally objectionable.’ ”

“To all of our transgender youth and their families—we see you. We love you. You are already bearing the burden of so much harm caused by the bullies in the Oklahoma Legislature. To our families, supporters, and community partners— thank you for showing up today. Your presence tells our children that they are not alone. This fight is far from over. Together, we’re going to build an Oklahoma where we *all* have the safety to thrive.”

Pronouns:

Nicole McAfee: they/she

We know that stories amplifying attacks on 2SLGBTQ+ people have a measurable negative impact on mental health. We ask that stories covering this topic include information to access 2SLGBTQ+ affirming mental health support, such as Trans Lifeline (877-565-8860) and the LGBT Hotline (888-843-4564). Especially because this proposal targets kids, providing information about youth specific 2SLGBTQ+ affirming resources, like the Trevor Project (call 1-866-488-7386 or text START to 678-678), is a necessary act of suicide disruption.

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