

Senate sends bill banning gender-affirming care for minors to Evers, who plans to veto

Posted on Tuesday, Oct 17, 2023

Health care providers in Wisconsin would be prohibited from providing any services that assist a minor in transitioning genders under legislation the Senate approved along party lines today.

GOP backers said the legislation was needed to protect minors from making a rash decision they could regret later in life, ticking off a series of things those under 18 are barred from doing under state law.

Sen. Van Wanggaard, R-Racine, said that includes buying spray paint and the bill is about protecting young people until they are adults and more prepared to make such a decision.

“My goodness, this is about a child,” Wanggaard said.

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The bill, approved 22-10, next heads to Gov. Tony Evers, who has vowed to veto it. Ahead of today’s vote, Evers proclaimed “Rise Up for LGBTQ Youth Day” in the state. Backers say the effort is about combatting hateful rhetoric and policies.

“I want LGBTQ folks, including our trans kids, to know they are welcome, wanted, and belong here in Wisconsin, and I will keep fighting every day to continue our work to build a state where they feel safe, supported, and loved being exactly who they are,” Evers said.

Dem state Sen. Mark Spreitzer, who’s openly gay, cited Evers’ expected veto in questioning why his GOP colleagues were rushing a bill that won’t become law. He

recounted his best friend in college transitioning and how hormone treatments improved her mental health.

“This bill is nothing short of cruel,” Spreitzer said.

The ban, which would apply to gender-affirming care such as hormones and puberty blockers as well as surgery, wouldn't apply if the minor was born with a medically verifiable genetic disorder for sex development. It also would apply to treatments for any procedure undertaken because the minor suffers from a physical disorder, injury or illness that places them in danger or death or impairment.

Those providers found to have violated the ban would have their licenses revoked.