



POLITICS 2024 ELECTIONS MEGYN KELLY TRANS ISSUES

The Latest GOP Debate Had One Of The Grossest Anti-Trans Moments Yet

Megyn Kelly opened the floor for candidates to openly attack transgender youth on Wednesday night.



By Nick Visser

Dec 6, 2023, 11:22 PM EST



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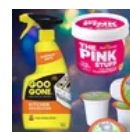
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Megyn Kelly promised Wednesday night that the moderators of the [fourth and final GOP primary debate](#) would dig into the "issue" of gender-affirming care for transgender kids. But her pledge quickly devolved into many of the [Republicans](#) onstage attacking queer Americans and repeating dog whistles about vulnerable youth.

Kelly asked former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie about a [law](#) he signed in 2017 that required the state to adopt regulations around trans kids. But she used the moment to press Christie on his stance on gender-affirming care for minors, an issue that has become a [dangerous political cudgel](#) during the campaign.

"The surgeries done on minors involve cutting off body parts at a time when these kids cannot even legally smoke a cigarette," Kelly said during a question on health care for trans youth. "Kids who go from puberty blockers to cross-sex hormones are at a much greater likelihood of winding up sterile. How is it that you think a parent should be able to OK these surgeries, never mind the sterilization of a child?"

“Aren’t you way too out of step on this issue to be the Republican nominee?” she concluded.

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Kelly’s statements are not backed by medical guidance. Most trans youth [do not even begin](#) to medically transition until adolescence, and treatment begins with puberty-blocking drugs or hormone therapy, not surgery. To start puberty blockers in most cases, a person must show a lasting pattern of gender nonconformity or gender dysphoria and be able to understand the treatment and consent, according to [the Mayo Clinic](#).

The AMA also found that trans youth receiving gender-affirming care had [dramatic decreases in depression](#) and suicidal ideology in the year after they began.

Christie, who has [come out against](#) transgender health care bans, pushed back on Kelly’s assertion, saying Republicans “believe in less government, not more.” He added that he trusted parents to make more decisions about their kids, “without the government telling them what those values should be.”

“I believe there is no one who loves my children more than me,” Christie said. “Not some government bureaucrat.”



But Kelly's comment Wednesday opened up the floor for the other three candidates to express extreme anti-trans views. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis equated gender-affirming care — overseen by a child's parents and their doctor — as "cutting off their genitals" and "mutilating these minors."

Businessman Vivek Ramaswamy went a step further, declaring "transgenderism" a "mental health disorder."

And former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley stood by her comments that gender-affirming care should be withheld from children until they are 18. She later called the issue surrounding trans students playing on sports teams that are in line with their gender identity the "women's issue of our time."

Kelly's comment is part of her [longstanding attacks](#) on the queer community. She has called health care for trans kids "[a weird form](#) of conversion therapy" and misgendered trans people because she's "done" with using correct pronouns.



The Republican Party has fiercely adopted trans health care as a political rallying cry in recent campaign cycles, pushing more than 500 anti-LGBTQ+ bills in 2023 alone, [according to the ACLU](#).

The [American Medical Association](#), [American Association of Pediatrics](#) and [American Psychological Association](#) have all declared gender-affirming care essential to the well-being of trans kids, urging politicians to stay out of the debate.

And even though anti-trans laws are not a politically popular idea, the GOP has [embraced them anyway](#), to the [detriment of queer youth](#).

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