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# Texas attorney general declares gender-affirming medical care for transgender kids 'child abuse'

By [Joseph Leahy](#) | [The Texas Newsroom](#)

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the March 1 primary election for which early voting began earlier this month.

## **Ken Paxton's legal opinion issued Monday defines certain gender-affirming medical treatments for minors as child abuse.**

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton has issued a legal opinion defining certain gender-affirming health care for transgender kids as child abuse.

"There is no doubt that these procedures are 'abuse' under Texas law, and thus must be halted," the Republican attorney general [wrote in a statement announcing](#) his legal interpretation Monday.

Paxton also stated the [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services](#) (DFPS) "has a responsibility to act accordingly."

The [legal opinion](#)—which is nonbinding—asserts medical treatments, such as hormone therapy and puberty blockers, meet the state's legal standard of abuse for causing "mental or emotional injury to a child that results in an observable and material impairment in the child's growth, development, or psychological functioning" under section [261.001 of the Texas Family Code](#).

Paxton's interpretation came in response to a request from the chairman of the Texas House of Representatives [General Investigative committee](#), Rep. Matt Krause of Fort Worth.

Imposing new restrictions on transgender youth has emerged as a key political priority among Texas Republicans ahead of the March 1 primary election for which early voting began earlier this month. The issue gained momentum last year with the GOP-controlled state Legislature passing [House Bill 25](#) during the third special legislative session. The controversial legislation Gov. Greg Abbott signed into law in October restricts which sports teams transgender student athletes are allowed to compete on.

Groups that advocate for LGBTQ+ youth criticize Paxton's opinion as pandering to ultra conservative voters as he faces a competitive race for re-election against three challengers in the GOP primary next month.

"In a state where we've seen attack after attack on the lives of transgender children, Ken Paxton is once again showing his disregard for children's lives," said [Texas Freedom Network](#) president Val Benavidez in a statement.

"It is abundantly clear that Paxton sees transgender children as nothing more than political pawns. Their safety is certainly not his concern."

The group [Equality Texas](#) also accused Paxton of exaggerating a "non-existent problem as an urgent moral emergency" by spreading disinformation about health care for transgender people.

"We stand with every major, credible medical association in supporting age-appropriate, best-practice standards of health care for transgender youth and adults because that care is evidence-based, rooted in science and, quite literally, life-saving," the group said in a statement.

As the *Dallas Morning News* [reports](#), the American Medical Association, American Psychiatric Association and American Academy of Pediatrics have expressed support for gender-affirming care that is developmentally appropriate and nonjudgemental.

**Tags**[News](#)[transgender policy](#)[Ken Paxton](#)[Matt Krause](#)

## Joseph Leahy | The Texas Newsroom

Joseph Leahy anchors morning newscasts for NPR's statewide public radio collaborative, Texas Newsroom. He began his career in broadcast journalism as a reporter for St. Louis Public Radio in 2011. The following year, he helped launch Delaware's first NPR station, WDDE, as an afternoon newscaster and host. Leahy returned to St. Louis in 2013 to anchor local newscasts during All Things Considered and produce news on local and regional issues. In 2016, he took on a similar role as the local Morning Edition newscaster at KUT in Austin, before moving over to the Texas Newsroom.

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