News



People hold signs as the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington hears arguments Dec. 4, 2024, over an appeal by U.S. President Joe Biden's administration of a lower court's decision upholding a Republican-backed ban in Tennessee on gender-affirming medical care for transgender minors. (OSV News/Benoit Tessier, Reuters)

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President Donald Trump Jan. 28 signed an executive order stating his administration would seek to prohibit certain types of medical or surgical gender reassignment procedures for minors who identify as transgender.

The order directed that the government "will not fund, sponsor, promote, assist, or support the so-called 'transition' of a child from one sex to another, and it will rigorously enforce all laws that prohibit or limit these destructive and life-altering procedures."

"Across the country today, medical professionals are maiming and sterilizing a growing number of impressionable children under the radical and false claim that adults can change a child's sex through a series of irreversible medical interventions," the order stated. "This dangerous trend will be a stain on our Nation's history, and it must end."

At least 25 Republican-led states have adopted laws restricting or banning gender reassignment surgery or related hormonal treatments for minors, although not all of those bans are currently in effect amid legal challenges, according to data from the Movement Advancement Project, an LGBTQ+ policy group.

A still-pending ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court in United States v. Skrmetti, a challenge to one such law in Tennessee, could potentially have a significant impact on the future of those laws.

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Supporters of banning gender transition surgeries or hormonal treatments for minors who identify as transgender say such restrictions will prevent them from making irreversible decisions as children that they may later come to regret as adults. Critics of such bans argue that preventing those interventions could cause other

harm to minors, such as mental health issues or increase the risk of physical self-harm.

A 2022 study by the UCLA Williams Institute found there are approximately 1.6 million people in the U.S. who identify as transgender. Nearly half of that population is between the ages of 13 and 24.

A recent JAMA Pediatrics study found 926 U.S. adolescents with commercial insurance and a gender-related diagnosis received puberty blockers from 2018 through 2022, and none of them were under the age of 12. The study did not include minors covered by Medicaid.

In guidance on health care policy and practices released in March 2023, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Doctrine stated the church's opposition to interventions that "involve the use of surgical or chemical techniques that aim to exchange the sex characteristics of a patient's body for those of the opposite sex or for simulations thereof."

"Any technological intervention that does not accord with the fundamental order of the human person as a unity of body and soul, including the sexual difference inscribed in the body, ultimately does not help but, rather, harms the human person," the document states.

This story appears in the **Trump's Second Term** feature series. View the full series.