

December 20, 2022

The Honorable Kristi Noem  
Governor of South Dakota  
500 East Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501

Dear Governor Noem,

We're writing to you because of our grave concern over a high-profile event happening in your state next month. On January 13, 2023, Sanford Health is partnering with The Transformation Project, whose goal is to condone sex changes in children, in hosting the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Midwest Gender Identity Summit. This event is happening at the Sanford Research Center in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. It includes as speakers several Sanford Health DEI administrators and doctors promoting gender ideology, a belief system that severely undermines healthy mental and physical outcomes, especially in children.

Under your direction, the State of South Dakota should be in the business of ensuring that health care providers live up to their ethical obligations to do no harm. We commend your action directing the Department of Health to cancel its contract with The Transformation Project as an acknowledgment of the state's reckless engagement in trans ideology. By sponsoring this event, Sanford Health also is an accomplice in the destructive agenda of promoting radical gender ideology. Ideologues promoting this ideology claim that children can be born in the wrong body and that doctors should "treat" this belief with drugs and surgeries to affirm that deception, rather than helping children reconcile with their bodies.

The Transformation Project is an activist non-profit whose mission is "supporting and empowering transgender youth." They promote the lie that men can be women, boys can be girls, that some people are even "non-binary" or "asexual." This ideology has inspired thousands of children to take puberty-blocking drugs and cross-sex hormones. It's given cover for doctors to amputate healthy body parts even of minors and to fashion nonfunctioning replicas of sex organs.

Sanford Health describes its mission as "dedicated to sharing God's love through the work of health, healing and comfort." Telling youth to reject their God-given bodies is not "sharing God's love." Advocating damaging medical interventions to accommodate confusion or dysphoria is not working for "health, healing and comfort." Quite the opposite.

The citizens of South Dakota deserve to have their children protected from this summit's destructive ideology. When a once-trusted health system like Sanford Health aids and abets this deceptive, and anti-child ideology, it has failed in its mission.

Children struggling with gender confusion should be protected from unethical medical interventions that ignore underlying causes and reject long-term health and well-being. Puberty blocking drugs that carry severe FDA warnings, cross-sex hormones that sterilize, and damaging surgeries that result in serious comorbidities and regret should not be peddled by Sanford Health.

We call on you to take action as Governor of South Dakota and set an example to others to stop this pernicious trend deceiving our youth today. Telling kids they may be born in the wrong body is a self-destructive prophecy that is inflicting countless wounds on youth today. The corporate interests tied up in this increasingly lucrative industry are preying on America's youth. Sanford Health will be among these predators if this event goes forward.

Respectfully, we are asking you use your leadership to speak out against the misguided message of this summit and urge President and CEO Bill Gassen to disassociate Sanford Health and its employees from its message. Any benefit of professional credit will only serve to advance its radical philosophy and harm children and families. As Governor, your voice is essential to send the message that harming children is not a South Dakota value.

As a follow-up, we are also asking you to initiate a full investigation of state taxpayer-funded health and education grants, contracts, and activities that promote gender identity and transition and a detailed study of how many and what type of gender reassignment procedures are happening to youth through Sanford Health and its affiliates.

Sincerely,

Penny Young Nance  
CEO and President  
Concerned Women for America

Terry Schilling  
President  
American Principles Project

Tony Perkins  
President  
Family Research Council

Ryan Anderson  
President  
Ethics and Public Policy Center

Roger Severino  
Vice President of Domestic Policy  
The Heritage Foundation

Jay Richards  
Director, DeVos Center  
The Heritage Foundation

Craig DeRoche  
President  
Family Policy Alliance

Nicole Neily  
Executive Director  
Parents Defending Education Action

Linda Schauer  
State Director  
CWA of South Dakota

Norman Woods  
Executive Director  
Family Heritage Alliance

Erin Brewer, Ph.D.  
Co-Founder and President  
Advocates Protecting Children

Mary Hasson  
Director of the Person and Identity Project  
Ethics and Public Policy Center

Maria Keffler, M.Ed.  
Co-Founder  
Advocates Protecting Children

Jennifer Roback Morse, Ph.D.  
Founder and President  
The Ruth Institute