

2025 Lobby Days

Talking Points for Senate Bill 418

Ensure Equal Access to Care for All Author: Senator Caroline Menjivar

- AAUW of California is in strong support of SB 418 by Senator Menjivar.
- This measure would prohibit a health plan or a health insurance provider from denying coverage or denying benefits to a person based upon their race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex – including sex characteristics such as intersex traits, pregnancy, and gender identity.
- In preventing discrimination in healthcare coverage, SB 418 would protect anyone who is subject to discrimination, generally, and sex stereotyping, specifically, from losing coverage or being denied benefits on the basis of sex. Sex stereotyping includes the labeling of a person’s appearance and/or actions as problematic (e.g. “not feminine enough”) based on reductive and unscientific beliefs about sex and gender.
- Given the focus on sex stereotyping, SB 418 protects coverage for gender affirming care, such as hormone therapy, cosmetic procedures, or psychological support, at a moment when the provision of this care may be newly challenged, based on federal attempts to re-litigate and limit the definition of sex.
- Major medical organizations, including the American Medical Association¹ and the American Academy of Pediatrics,² endorse gender-affirming care as essential for the well-being of transgender and nonbinary adults and young people. Numerous studies show that gender-affirming care significantly improves mental health outcomes for members of the transgender and nonbinary communities.³⁴⁵ SB 418 aligns California with best practices and recommendations from leading health authorities, ensuring that our policies reflect the latest medical evidence and ethical standards.
- Access to gender-affirming care is a fundamental aspect of **health equity** and human rights. Everyone deserves the right to receive the care they need to make informed decisions about their bodies. Supporting SB 418 is a commitment to safeguarding the rights of all people who access gender affirming care,⁶⁷ with particular emphasis on protections for members of the transgender and nonbinary communities across California.
- Passage of SB 418 will protect against discrimination on the basis of sex, while also sending a powerful message of support to the LGBTQ+ community, affirming that their needs matter. Creating an

¹ <https://www.ama-assn.org/press-center/press-releases/ama-states-stop-interfering-health-care-transgender-children>

² <https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/153/1/e2023064292/196236/Prohibition-of-Gender-Affirming-Care-as-a-Form-of>

³ <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/2827152>

⁴ <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2789423>

⁵ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/39432272/>

⁶ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37285414/>

⁷ <https://www.hrc.org/resources/get-the-facts-on-gender-affirming-care>

environment where all individuals can express their identities without fear is foundational to a strong democracy.

We ask for your “Yes” vote on SB 418.