# Federal Judge Overturns Florida Ban on Gender-Affirming Care for Minors



On June 16, 2024, a federal judge ruled as unconstitutional much of a Florida law that banned gender-affirming care for minors and imposed restrictions on adults. The legislation was originally supported by Governor Ron DeSantis. Judge Robert L. Hinkle of the federal district court in Tallahassee delivered the ruling, comparing opposition to transgender rights to historical opposition faced by minorities and women.

The contested law, passed by Republicans in May 2023, prohibited the prescription of puberty blockers and other hormone-related therapies for minors, while also banning gender-affirming medical procedures or surgeries for this age group. Additionally, it imposed restrictions on adults seeking similar treatments. Following the law's passage, three families and several civil rights groups filed a lawsuit, arguing that the legislation deprived parents of their ability to make medical decisions for their children, potentially causing severe mental and physical harm.

Rabbi Samantha Kahn, a resident of Florida whose 10-year-old daughter is transgender, expressed relief at the ruling, seeing it as a possibility to remain in the state without fearing for her child’s medical needs. Meanwhile, DeSantis's office denounced the decision and indicated plans to appeal, arguing that the law aimed to protect children from what they termed as "harmful" medical practices.

Pressures and legal debates over similar restrictions are observed internationally, with some European countries implementing their own limitations on gender treatments for minors. However, Judge Hinkle noted that no other country has imposed an outright ban analogous to Florida's law.

Simone Chriss from Southern Legal Counsel hailed the judge's decision as a significant win for Florida’s transgender community, while pediatric psychologist Natasha Poulopoulos highlighted the psychological impact the initial ban had on her patients. The ruling does not address provisions concerning gender-affirming surgeries for minors and adults, as these were not contested in the lawsuit.