

I started testosterone a few weeks before my 16th birthday. Having had crippling gender dysphoria for several years which led to suicide attempt after suicide attempt, starting testosterone was something I had dreamed about since I was 14. I had sought medical care for my transition briefly after I came out, but as you can see, they made me wait a year to start since it is, as we can all agree, a huge decision to make, especially as a minor.

I'm 18 now. I go to the University of Cincinnati and am majoring in psychology. I hope to be a professor eventually. I have a boyfriend and friends along with As and the occasional B for my grades. I still have some gender dysphoria on occasion, but I haven't had a single suicide attempt since I started hormones. I also got a double mastectomy this past April. Because of this, I can live my life as if I was born a male. Quite frankly, I've never been happier.

Now, I'd like for you to reflect on my story I've just told. Did I need saving? Was I experimented on? The doctors had done these treatments thousands of times and there was no testing of new techniques. If I hadn't sought out the *medical care* that I needed, I would be dead by my own hands. Is taking away that care a form of saving? The only thing you would have been saving me from is a world full of transphobic and misinformed people like those presenting this bill.

However, I won't say I don't understand the concern. There's no denying that there is a trend of identifying as transgender without gender dysphoria or true desire to be a different gender among some groups of teens. This is absolutely a problem but attacking the entirety of trans youth is not the answer and will do far more harm than good. I have met plenty of trans individuals my age who medically transitioned in their youth who would also not be alive today if it wasn't for having access to transition care. I've also met a person my age who did medically

transition as a youth and ended up detransitioning. That being said, the former group significantly outnumbers the latter.

So, what is the solution? What can stop impressionable teens who crave identity and social acceptance from wrongly transitioning? The answer is incredibly simple: train psychologists better. Some psychologists automatically rush to medical treatment for any youth who claims to be trans out of fear of the person suffering further and/or being seen as “transphobic”. These psychologists are where the issue stems from, not the transition care itself. Psychologists need to be better equipped to learn about the signs of social influence and identity search within teens. There also should be a wait period, like the one I had, between coming out and starting medical transition. This can allow for a potential phase to fizzle out and allows more time for psychologists to understand what is truly causing the teen to desire being the opposite or different gender.

As for younger children, I see absolutely no harm in the usage of puberty blockers, which are almost always the treatment for gender dysphoric pre-pubescent children. Puberty blockers are entirely reversible and do no harm, so I see no reason as to why there would need to be a ban on those, considering the child can just decide to stop them at any time.

I truly hope that those who are for this bill can open their eyes and see the reality of the trans experience. The large majority of trans youth are being saved from the excruciating reality of living with gender dysphoria when they medically transition. Taking away the thing that saves them certainly is not in their interest, and besides, caring about the children is what this is supposed to be all about, right?

Thank you

