

Mikael McLaren

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Mikael McLaren. I am father to a 17 year old transgender daughter. I am strongly opposed to House Bill 454, banning gender affirming healthcare for minors. I could go into a long winded story about how my daughter, born the second of Identical twin boys, showed early signs of identifying as a girl. I could share with you the heartache, the sleepless nights, and the frantic searching my wife and I did trying to find out why my former son insisted she was a girl. I could tell you about the 6-hour trips to Chicago to meet with a therapist who helped us to understand who my daughter was, and how we could best support her. We, as a family, have been through almost every emotion there is in order to support our daughter.

There have been bumps in the road. We have encountered resistance from her peers, family members, and strangers who felt they knew what was best for our daughter. We have been called every name in the book, child abusers, groomers, hell bound, sinners, and worse, for the crime of supporting our daughter. This is not an easy journey. This is not capitulating to the whims of our child. This is an arduous journey that involves self doubt, sleepless nights, and fear that, as the father of my household, I am not doing what is best for my family. But the smile on my daughter's face, the difference in who she has become, and how far we have progressed tells me that it is all worth it and that supporting her was the right decision. We have managed to do this even as her identity and her medical care have become a political wedge issue.

A recent survey from The Trevor Project found that 85% of transgender and non-binary kids have suffered harm to their mental health due to these efforts to legislate against transgender children. This same survey tells us that transgender kids who have support at home have a far reduced rate of attempted suicide than those who do not. My family has done their part to ensure that my daughter is safe and supported. It is beyond disappointing to know that there are people out there who do not believe that my daughter deserves to be safe and supported. That you are looking to take away the safety net that we have worked so hard to put in place for her.

Understand that passing this bill is, without exaggeration, a death sentence for kids who depend on gender affirming care for their health and safety. That the blood of those kids is on your hands, and you can prevent it. I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this dangerous, life changing bill. Please consider my parental rights and responsibility to support and protect my family. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.