

Thank you for allowing me to testify today.

My name is Kevyn James Breedon and I'm thirty-one years old. I'm trans masculine, I've been on testosterone for over three years, and I had my top surgery more than a year ago.

I've lived in northeast Ohio most of my life, I am an educator, and I have over ten years of experience of working with young people.

I am the Programming Manager for Camp Lilac, a summer camp for trans youth ages twelve to seventeen, right here in Ohio. I'm also a youth mentor for a support group for trans youth ages five to eighteen called Margie's Kids which meets in Akron. I'm the founder of the Cuyahoga Valley Queer Hike and I'm a Sunday school teacher at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent.

I first came out as trans when I was about three years old but I did not have the words at that time to describe myself. I would not learn of the word transgender, or that there were other people like me, until I was entering 8th grade. I then developed a habit of opening any dictionary I found to see if the word transgender or transsexual was included. The vast majority of the time, it was not. If I told someone that my friend was transgender, they would ask, "What is transgender? What does that mean?"

Times have changed quickly. By now many people have a friend who is trans or who uses 'they' pronouns. 2% of highschoolers today identify as transgender or gender nonconforming. That number has increased – not because it's cool and trendy – but because it's safer now to be trans than it was in my generation. Some of you may remember when it was unacceptable to be a left-handed student.

I firmly believe that all efforts to try to deprive or limit the freedom, liberty, and pursuit of happiness of the trans child and their family, particularly their right to access trans affirming healthcare, are cruel, obscene, deadly, unconstitutional, and in direct violation of the standard practices already set in place by medical professionals.

**If the safety of adolescents is truly your concern, you will make sure to follow the general best practices advocated for by the American Academy of Pediatrics, Endocrine Society, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, American Psychiatric Association, the US Department of Justice, and the World Professional Association for Transgender Health. You will say no to House Bill 454.**

To take away access to life-saving care from trans youth is to actively harm them further, not to protect them.

To imprison medical professionals for doing what they have sworn to do under oath is outrageous. It is an extreme act of government overreach and has nothing to do with religious freedom.

If we truly wish to protect children from harmful, unnecessary surgeries, we ought to end the practice of coercing families into 'correcting' the bodies of intersex children without their consent.

If we truly wish to protect vulnerable children from adults who want to manipulate them and their sense of identity, we ought to ban the legalized form of torture known as 'conversion therapy'.

In any case, pre-pubescent children are not undergoing 'sex changes', the risks of trans affirming medical treatment do not 'far outweigh any benefit', and these treatment plans do not carelessly skip over psychological assessments, all of which the language of this proposed legislation suggests.

According to a 2018 study of 68 trans masculine youth who had chest reconstruction surgery, 67 of those 68 reported feeling a complete absence of regret more than a year later after surgery. I know I certainly have no regrets.

Despite so many messages telling me I might regret these decisions, I consider starting hormones and having surgery as the best decisions I have ever made in my life. When asked on the operating room table how long I had waited for this moment, I replied, "Since I was 12."

I fight to protect trans kids because I was once a trans kid. There have always been trans kids. There will always be trans kids.

When proponents of this bill say, "just let kids be kids", what they are really saying is "I don't want kids to be trans".

Trans kids deserve to be loved and supported just as much as any other kids. Trans people belong. We will not be erased. We will not be silent. We are resilient.

Thank you for your time,  
Kevyn Breedon

> 'Chest Reconstruction and Chest Dysphoria in Transmasculine Minors and Young Adults – Comparisons of Nonsurgical and Postsurgical Cohorts'

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2674039>

> 'Similarity in transgender and cisgender children's gender development' – Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America'

<https://www.pnas.org/content/116/49/24480>

> 'Pubertal Suppression for Transgender Youth and Risk of Suicidal Ideation'

<https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/145/2/e20191725/68259/Pubertal-Suppression-for-Transgender-Youth-and>

>'New Study Shows Discrimination, Stigma, and Family Pressure Drive "Detransition" Among Transgender People'

<https://fenwayhealth.org/new-study-shows-discrimination-stigma-and-family-pressure-drive-detransition-among-transgender-people/>

> 'Supporting and Caring for Transgender Children' -- American Academy of Pediatrics, Human Rights Campaign, American College of Osteopathic Pediatricians

<https://assets2.hrc.org/.../SupportingCaringforTransChild...>

> 'Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender, and Gender Nonconforming People' -- World Professional Association for Transgender Health

<https://www.wpath.org/publications/soc>

> 'Guidelines for Psychological Practice With Transgender and Gender Nonconforming People' -- American Psychological Association

<https://www.apa.org/practice/guidelines/transgender.pdf>