

Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony in opposition to HB 454. My name is Eli, and I am from the Columbus area and am a senior in high school. I am a transgender male. I would like to state my strong opposition to this bill in the form of telling my personal story.

Before my diagnosis of Gender Dysphoria, I was aware that my inward gender did not line up with my biological sex. I was also having social issues trying to fit in with girls when I do not, and was at times being bullied and harassed about my obvious differences. I was suffering a disconnect with my own body which became increasingly worse once I started puberty. Gender dysphoria is NOT a choice or the result of "dislike of gender roles," but a real ailment causing intense distress. The only known treatment is transitioning.

I knew I was different for the majority of my young years. I went to my mother when I was a preteen, explaining to her my distress and condition. It wasn't until years later that we discussed medical transition. To have medical transition even be considered for me, I was intensely analyzed, went through many, many hours of therapy and had a team of doctors. My family and I were educated thoroughly on any body changes I would experience.

Now that I have hit two years since starting hormones, I don't have a single regret, and I can say with 100% certainty that I wouldn't be here anymore if my Gender Dysphoria wasn't treated properly. Not only did treatment bring me comfort, it also gave me hope for the future, provided me a connection to my body and voice, and allowed me to build my relationship with God. Now that my body reflects who I am, I have gained a much more positive outlook on life. Medically transitioning has been the best decision I was ever lucky enough to make. Thank you for your time.