

Bennett McCausland

Chair Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee, thank you for this opportunity to voice my opposition to House Bill 454.

My name is Bennett McCausland. I am a transgender youth who happens to live in Ohio and my pronouns are he/him. I am strongly opposed to House Bill 454, preventing transgender youth from receiving proper medical care.

I have been on the waiting list for Testosterone for 3 months and 7 days. I still have about 4 and a half more months to go. Everyday, I learn more about myself. And everyday, I grow more and more impatient. To say transgender youth aren't supported enough is an understatement. I find it mad that today, in 2021, we still struggle the way we do with equal rights. I find it mad that the waiting list is 7 to 8 months. In my experience, I struggle with simple, daily things that some people wouldn't bat an eye to. Daily attendance at school makes me wish I would forget my name and fade into the life of somebody else. Somebody who doesn't grimace from the sight of their own body. Somebody who doesn't flinch at the call of their own name. Somebody who doesn't hate the sound of their own voice. Paradise. Paradise is what that somebody has compared to me. Yet, I roam the halls of my ignorant school and worry if I'm slouching too much or not enough or if I was walking masculine enough or if that person who just looked at me thought I was a boy or girl. This may sound crazy to you, but this is just a daily occurrence to me, an anxiety riddled teenage trans guy just trying to survive and not hate myself along the way. I dream of paradise.

Paradise to me can be defined with a dose of C₁₉H₂₈O₂. That precious chemical formula haunts me. I yearn for it desperately. As I said, I've been on the waiting list for my paradise for more than 3 months. I've been enduring the rocky waves of depression and dysphoria and I am constantly under attack by those who don't understand my struggle. The sea leading to paradise is unstable and hurtful. But it's the thought of finally loving myself that keeps me going. It's the thought of paradise that keeps my head just barely above the freezing cold waters. My paradise that you're threatening to take away with House Bill 454. I fear that if you take my paradise away, I will drown. I will drown and hundreds more will join me at the bottom if this bill comes to life.

Please, don't take away my only lifeline. Please don't take away my paradise. It is all that is keeping me afloat. I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this dangerous bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.