

Kris Patton

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.

Hello, I am the proud parent of a 13 year old daughter who just happens to be transgender. The affirming healthcare she is getting has literally saved her life. Before getting care we were afraid we would loose her to suicide. It was the hardest time I have ever been through and I am a breast cancer survivor. I spent weeks trying to find a therapist with an opening and finally found one. We got on a months-long wait list for affirming care, because we knew if we didn't get her the help she needed that she would no longer be with us. But we did get her help and every single day I thank the Lord that we were able to. Our daughter's name is Callie and she is an amazing, amazing kid. Once she was able to access the mental health and affirming care she so desperately needed, things did a 180. Today she is doing so well. She is supported and loved by everyone in her life, including her school- she can see a future for herself. For a long time things were so hard. We knew from the start that to help Callie we needed to learn literally all that we could about the transgender experience and we did, and we continue to learn every day. Callie was born this way and it is such an incredible part of who she is, however it doesn't define her. She is a kid, who just needs support and love, and to get the care she needs, just like all of the kids like her and like every other kid. Callie knows who she is and she suffered in silence for years, unable to come out, because of our society and how trans people are treated. But she had no choice but to come out and to transition and to live as who she truly is, to be her authentic self. Seeing the anti-trans bills like these all over the country sends Callie the message that something is wrong with her, that it is not OK to be who she is, that a large group of people do not even want her to exist. Can you imagine what that feels like? On top of how hard it is to be trans in this world? It is cruel, and unconscionable to me that we would not let trans children live their lives and support them every step of the way. Because they need us more than ever, all of us.

Please stop HB 454 and allow families and children to make these crucial and extremely well thought out decisions with their doctors. As a mother and an ally for all trans folks everywhere I would implore everyone to love and support trans children in any way you can, because they are the ones who need all of us more than ever. It's hard for me to sleep at night knowing I live in a world where there is so much hatred and cruelty but I will keep fighting every single day, for Callie and every trans child just like her. Thank you for listening. This issue is so emotional for so many because the lives of our children are at stake. That is not an understatement.

Thank you again, please vote no on this bill. Sincerely, Kris Patton