

Parker Parker, Testimony HB 454

I shouldn't have to be here.

I am a senior in high school, varsity athlete, and in all honesty a nerd - who just wanted to enjoy their senior year in high school.

But I can't - I can't because yet again my rights as a transgender youth are up for debate. It is a shame that our politicians are more concerned about dismissing the rights of young people like me - instead of making our state, our country better economically, environmentally, and safe for everyone - I am truly disappointed.

Instead we feel as a state that we need to prevent people, youth, from existing as whole people.

I am an athlete. I have been a four year varsity letter winner for field hockey and track at my high school. I was voted offensive MVP by my field hockey team and was selected one of the top 12 players in Central Ohio for this season. I am verbally committed to play D1 field hockey at Merrimack college next year.

I am a student. I am a senior at Olentangy high school. I have maintained straight A's for every year of high school. I have gone to the states for the science fair. Achieved a 32 on my ACT and have a 4.1 GPA and am a part of National Honor Society.

I am a child. I have parents who love me. I know sometimes we fight, disagree on certain things but I love them. And I know they will always want the best for me. My parents love me and I am so grateful.

And

I am human like you.

I am human. If you cut me I will bleed like everyone in this room. I bleed red like you. I cry when I am hurt like you. I experienced a heart break like you. I laugh like you. I experience the joys life can bring like you.

But adding transgender in front of that seems to, for many people, strip me of all my humanity.

And this is what this bill seeks to do.

You seek to strip my rights to health care,

You seek to strip me of my right to my body,

But most importantly, if you choose to pass this bill, you will abolish my right to live as my true authentic self.

The inaccurate rhetoric used in this bill is outrageous. And to make matters worse there is no demonstration this information is credible. If there is anything I have learned as a student, it is to cite your sources. To say there are "scientific studies" or "studies" should not, and I repeat, should not be enough to convince our state legislature this bill would "do no harm." Because this bill will do harm including the unneeded loss of trans youth lives.

Established institutions such as the Trevor Project and the National Library of Medicine (associated with the National Center for Biotechnology information) found 82% of trans individuals have considered suicide, and 1 in 5 trans youth have attempted.

One of the ways these stats can be lowered is through gender affirming care, exactly what this bill seeks to ban. When trans youth have access to this care it can be life saving.

According to the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law trans youth that has access to gender affirming care is associated with lower prevalence of suicidal thoughts and attempts.

If I had access to this care, my attempt to end my life could have been prevented.

Having affirmation in who I am, in who others are, is life saving.

If I had access to gender affirming health care, I wouldn't have to be disgusted with what I saw in the mirror everyday, a body that does not match who I am. The stress of experiencing this led to my depression, anxiety that built up during my sophomore year built up and led to my attempt.

I still hate my body everytime I look in the mirror, and so does the majority of trans youth. If you choose to pass this bill you will make this self hate permanent.

If you choose to pass this bill, you will force teachers and medical professionals out trans youth to their families without their consent.

If you choose to pass this bill, you take away my rights to be myself.

I strongly encourage you to vote no on House bill 454.