

My name is Leonardo Hamric, I'm 19 years old, and I am transgender. As someone who did NOT receive gender affirming care as a minor, I want to tell you why I vehemently oppose this bill.

I knew I was a boy before the age of 9, and I came out as transgender when I was 13 years old. By that time I had already started puberty, but I did not have the support of my parents in starting hormone blockers or hormone replacement therapy. Being forced to watch my body change in ways opposite from my expectations was confusing, frustrating, and claustrophobic on a good day. It was horrifying to be fully aware of what was happening to me, knowing there was a way to stop it, and being absolutely helpless to do anything about it. To this day, I still feel that the hardest thing I've had to endure was waiting until I was 18 to medically transition. My entire adolescence was taken from me.

It seems like no one pushing for bans on gender affirming care wants to acknowledge that puberty is equally as permanent as hormone replacement therapy. Countless physical aspects aside, the mental and emotional consequences of being forced through the wrong puberty are long lasting. In the over five years I was forced to wait to receive care, I developed depression, anxiety, dissociation, and an eating disorder. These were all direct results of my dysphoria being left untreated. I still deal with these issues today. In middle school and high school I missed out on countless social opportunities because I felt like there was no place for me in most friend groups. I have persistent back and rib pain because it was both mentally intolerable and practically unsafe for me to leave the house without wearing a chest binder before I had surgery. My grades suffered, my relationships suffered, and my mental and physical health suffered because of my inability to access trans healthcare.

There were countless times in my adolescence when the only thing keeping me from attempting suicide was the hope that one day I would be able to transition. The only thing that made life worth living in my 13 year old brain was knowing that one day I could be comfortable in my own body. *I needed to know what it would feel like before I could die.* It barely felt worth it most of the time.

If you take care away from kids who are already receiving it, you will pull their entire lives out from under them. If you take away the hope of receiving care from kids who are close to accessing it, you will make them miserable. Kids will die if this bill becomes law. If any of you on this committee truly care about keeping kids "SAFE", that should be enough reason for you to vote against it. You are not "saving" anyone. You are the ones they need to be saved from.

The majority of trans kids are like me. Most of us do not have access to healthcare before the age of 18. Most have stories very similar to mine. The ones who do have access to gender affirming care are lucky, and are being set up to live happier, more fulfilling lives. Taking that right away from them against the judgment of their parents, doctors, and every major medical association is flat out cruel. It is state sanctioned child abuse. Ultimately, you won't have stopped anyone from *being* transgender. There will be trans kids who survive this despite, and in spite of, your efforts to derail their lives and erase their existences. They will become trans adults. They will vote, they will be vocal, they will testify, they will protest, and they will NEVER let you forget your vile attempt to pass a bill like this. We will always be here. Thank you for your time.