

To whom it may concern,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a transgender individual who has experienced the challenges of gender dysphoria firsthand, I am writing to express my profound concerns and firm opposition to House Bill 68. This legislation seeks to restrict access to gender-affirming healthcare for transgender children. I implore you to reject it to protect these vulnerable individuals' rights, well-being, and dignity.

HB 68, as currently drafted, fails to recognize the unique needs and experiences of transgender youth grappling with gender dysphoria. Denying them access to essential gender-affirming healthcare, such as puberty blockers and hormone therapy, exacerbates their distress and contributes to their emotional and psychological harm. We must prioritize the well-being of these individuals and support them in their journey of self-discovery and self-acceptance.

Transgender youth have demonstrated positive outcomes from gender-affirming healthcare despite gender dysphoria being a recognized medical condition. Denying transgender children access to appropriate care not only jeopardizes their mental health but also places them at increased risk of depression, anxiety, self-harm, and for many, even suicide. As a society, we have a moral obligation to protect and support the well-being of our young people, particularly those most vulnerable.

I experienced firsthand what it's like to be denied your identity from a young age. The progression of my depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts became more and more prevalent over the years the closer I reached puberty. I neither wish to see my mental health decline again, nor see the mental health of other transgender individuals decline as well.

It is crucial to emphasize that gender-affirming healthcare for transgender children is a highly individualized and evidence-based approach. These treatments are not administered haphazardly or without careful consideration by a team of medical professionals specializing in transgender healthcare. The decision to pursue gender-affirming interventions is made collaboratively, involving the child, their parents or guardians, and medical experts who thoroughly assess the individual's physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

Furthermore, it is vital to understand that transgender individuals experiencing gender dysphoria are not seeking special privileges or trying to disrupt societal norms. We are simply striving to live authentically, free from discrimination and prejudice. Our pursuit of happiness and well-being should not be impeded by legislation that seeks to deny us the rights and protections afforded to others.

I urge you to reconsider your support for HB 68 and instead focus on measures that promote the well-being and inclusion of transgender youth. Let us ensure they have access to the necessary healthcare, support, and resources to navigate their gender journeys safely and authentically. Doing so can foster a more compassionate, understanding, and equitable society for all.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Braxton Stock (he/him/they/them)