

December 1st, 2023

To the members of the Government Oversight Committee:

I'm a 21 year old lesbian, biologically female, and I received gender affirming care as a teenager in Illinois. I was put on testosterone at 19 and I now struggle with a severe vocal handicap and sexual dysfunction among many other problems as a direct result of testosterone being given to me without much care. I've spent over a year and a half being tossed from one doctor to another to try to solve the physical pain I've been left in. They're stumped for obvious reasons, there's no standard of care for those that detransition. (I'm reading my words back and I'd also like to add: Is the health of trans people truly being considered, when they're being left without care if they decide they want to go back?)

It took me one appointment to receive testosterone, and it was around one or two hours long. Comorbid health conditions were not at all taken into consideration, mental or physical. The clinic I received this care from also failed to inform me of many health risks that may come with the administering of testosterone on my consent form, including but not limited to: risk of sleep apnea, sexual dysfunction, possible necessity of a total hysterectomy, and the very real risk of a shortened lifespan. I'm currently in the process of pursuing legal action against my clinic for medical malpractice. Despite this, I'm still against an outright ban on pediatric transition.

I think transitional care is vague and messy as it stands now. In no other medical setting do you get to diagnose yourself and essential self-medicate based off of that decision. The truth though is, the majority of people that medically transition are still happy with that choice as of now. Does that mean it's healthy? No, and it doesn't have to. A lot of decisions we make in life aren't healthy, even if they make us happy.

Where does that land people like me? Does banning this care ultimately do anything for anyone already hurt by or planning to transition? Will it help detransitioners left with health effects and nowhere to go to receive specialized care? Will it stop young people from transitioning, or will they just go somewhere else to get it that isn't as safe, like buying hormones that are readily available online and administering them at home without guidance from a medical professional? I don't think a ban would stop them. If you've talked to anyone set on transition I think you'd agree. I was set on transition. It feels like a life or death scenario, and people are very often told it is. Of course they'd just go somewhere else.

Do you want to help people who are planning on transitioning, or those who regret it? Banning transition won't. It's cutting the head off a hydra. We need to set high standards for the care dysphoric people are receiving, and that includes more safety nets to save people who would be hurt by transitional care. More research into the effects of hormones on people's bodies. More therapy, more awareness of how race, sex, cultural background, trauma and other things can cause someone to desire transition as a way to ease the pain they're in. Less ignoring the root causes of dysphoria, of medical professionals shamelessly acting like somehow we can be born hating our own bodies, or even be born in the wrong ones. True and unbiased care is needed desperately. That's all I have to say.

Ciara