

Throughout my entire life, my right as a gay man, a queer person, to exist, peacefully and comfortably has been callously debated in the public political sphere. I've heard some of the most heinous things, and sinister lies from people who claim to be christians, god Fearing christians at that. Debates over marriage rights, adoption rights, healthcare rights, and now clothing and dancing rights!

In addition to the fear of god, the main point in these debates is the protection of children. The claim that a boy in a dress dancing in the distance is hurting children in any way is unfathomable. Mrs. Doubtifiere certainly had nothing but a positive impact on me and every other person I know. Here are a few things that are actually harming children, that maybe you should direct your energy too; Malnutrition, poor education standards and failing schools, access to healthcare, bullying, abuse, and sexual assault! With nothing but evidence to the contrary the republicans in government have decided that gender is the real problem, and if we stop the boys from wearing dresses everything will be fine.

In this bill, and in so many others like it, you claim to want to protect children. In October Pastors spoke in favor of the amendment and claimed this was for the children. A study from *Nature Human Behavior* shows that in states where anti trans laws have been affected that suicide rates rose as high as 72% among children 13 to 17. We're debating settled science on representation with callousness, and perpetuating the same self hatred that kills children. I wouldn't consider that very pro-life!

This bill also aims to protect children from "entertainment that appeals to a prurient interest." What the proponents of this bill fail to recognize is that what is prurient is inherently subjective. Remove the topic of religion, and still all people have different interests, unique tastes, and wildly varying degrees of what they believe is or is not prurient. I find the poop emoji particularly vulgar, but instead of trying to have it banned, I just don't use it. If Drag isn't for you then you do not have to engage with it, you do not have to take your kids to see it, we are not tracking you down to force it upon you, but we shouldn't have to hide either. Another person's discomfort doesn't mean we can't go to our own spaces and do our own thing.

As I said in the beginning, debates about queer people have been taking place for decades while science has shown time and again that being trans, being gay, being queer is not a decision that we make. Why do you feel that it's ok to continue to punish us? The declaration of independence says "*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.*" Life liberty and the pursuit of happiness! 3 things that are constantly being taken away from us.