

Opponent Testimony for HB 68  
Senate Government Oversight Committee

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Government Oversight Committee,

This world needs more love and understanding. The ban on gender-affirming care is far from any kind of love and understanding. I want to talk about this ban from a parent's perspective.

My youngest is trans. He was an outgoing kid when he was younger. Pre-teen years made him really quiet, but I didn't understand the cause and chalked it up to everyday pre-teen woes. When he timidly broached being trans in 2018, I didn't accept it right away. I asked him if this was how he really felt or if he was still thinking about it. He went back into his shell and told me that he was still thinking about it. I hoped it was a fad or something he saw on the internet. Not my finest moment as a parent.

It took him 2 more years to officially come-out to us. I grieved for one day and only one day. I grieved, because I could no longer call him by the name we so carefully picked out for him. I grieved, because I didn't want him to struggle in a world that didn't fully accept him. What I soon realized was that if I didn't accept him, then I was making him struggle in what was supposed to be his safe place, his home. He told me something that impacted me greatly, "I'm still the same person." He was still my kid and he still had the same likes and dislikes. He was the same person. Being transgender did not change who he was.

Once we accepted him, I could see some of the weight lift off his shoulders. He could fully be himself around us. Slowly, he started to gain confidence and was once again becoming that outgoing kid. He had some health issues that postponed getting hormonal therapy. After 9 months of waiting, he was finally cleared to get treatment. He was so overjoyed that he started to tear up when he was finally able to start hormonal therapy. We are still going through this journey, but I'm so thankful that there is treatment that makes him feel more like himself. I can't express enough how much more confident and happy he is today due to the acceptance of us and the ability to access treatment that eases the dysphoria.

I'm thankful to the counselors and doctors who have guided us through this process. No step is done haphazardly. I don't know where we would be, if we weren't able to get the care my son needed because of a ban like this. How frustrating it would be to know there is care to help him feel better, but my rights as a parent, the rights of medical professionals, and the rights of my child have been taken away. Being unable to ease the pain of my child, because of an unnecessary ban. The ban will not change these kids from being transgender. It only prolongs the pain that is associated with this dysphoria. That is not love and understanding. The ban on gender-affirming care is cruel and should not even be up for discussion, much less voted on. Please, vote NO on HB 68.

Thank you for your time.  
Bridgette Hazelett