

Submitter: Molly W  
On Behalf Of: Vulnerable patients  
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care  
Measure: HB2458

Vote NO on HB2458

We do not have a crisis of "conversion therapy" in Oregon. Instead, therapists are being used to "affirm" and lead vulnerable people down a dangerous medical path without enough exploration into the complex reasons for wanting to transition, or what to expect after transition, especially in regard to debilitating medical complications. It is nearly impossible to get good professional support in Oregon when a person has been convinced through peer groups and social media influencers, that choosing a transgender identity is the answer to fitting-in and feeling good. The negative consequences are downplayed and hidden. Therapists are prohibited from being honest about common negative realities, and instead are expected to just be a vehicle to get them to the next step along the "journey."

Parents also have to be extremely careful of how we share our worries. Our concerns, our love for our children, and our need to protect have all been dismissed and vilified. Our friendships, jobs, and custody have all been threatened for asking questions and trying to protect our children from irreversible, lifelong bodily consequences. We are not bigots or transphobes. The vast majority of people I know are like me: left-leaning, life-long supporters of lesbian and gay rights. We are sympathetic overall to the struggles of people who believe they are transgender. We are compassionate about people who struggle with gender dysphoria. But what is happening to OUR children is not a gender dysphoria that came on at an early age, nor some sort of innate gender identity. Instead our children are suffering various forms of discomfort that came to them for other reasons (like a difficult puberty; inability to fit in with peers; bullying; mental health issues; autism; depression; isolation; seeking connection online; pressures of social media; being coerced online or by peer groups or by activist counselors; and many more complex reasons.)

What we have found with our struggling kids and young adults is that the idea of "gender-affirming" care trumps everything else that could be addressed and helped! The moment the word "gender" is mentioned many professionals ignore all the other comorbidities or trauma in a person's life. Kids and adults are being led to believe that transitioning will make them happy and solve all their problems. And worse, some professionals have been encouraging vulnerable kids and adults to become estranged from their families and to see their parents as villains and abusers! That is so dangerous to break the bonds at a time when people need their parent's guidance the most. In the last 3 years since this issue has touched our family, I have been reading the stories of thousands of detransitioners: people who took that medical path and later realized they made a horrible mistake and now re-identify as their

biological sex. They have irreversible changes and medical damage to their bodies. That is my worst nightmare as a parent.

If you haven't yet read Jamie Reed's testimony from her experience working with the trans identifying population in a clinic, it is imperative that you read it before casting your vote.

<https://www.thefp.com/p/i-thought-i-was-saving-trans-kids> Jamie Reed is progressive and queer, and married to a transman herself. Jamie turned whistleblower after she became concerned with the harm that was being done to patients, but was met with retribution from her employer when trying to raise concerns.

Jamie's story contains so many shocking examples of harm and neglect in the current affirmation system. Maybe her testimony will finally change policies and improve outcomes for these vulnerable patients. But people like you have to actually listen to those being harmed, and those who have witnessed the harm first-hand. If you pass this bill, we'll know you are really choosing to ignore and dismiss all of us concerned parents and citizens. And we will vote accordingly every chance we get.