

Submitter: Ed Diehl  
On Behalf Of: Anonymous 1  
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care  
Measure: HB2458

Honorable representative of the State of Oregon, I am a native-born Oregonian, a parent of a trans identified adult child, and a moderator on a Facebook Group with 3,300 parents of transgender youth who love and support their kids, but who also have questions and concerns about their kid's gender confusion, as well as their mental health in general.

These last few years of pandemic, isolation, and online learning has been very hard on the mental health of our kids. Most parents in the group report their child coming out trans during the lock down or shortly after. Too many to just be coincidental. It is simply not plausible that the vast increase in young people declaring transgenderism is a natural phenomenon.

The NUMBER ONE question we hear in our group is "How do I get good counseling for my child or young adult?" We do not deny there may have been abuses in the past, but the inadvertent result of passing this, perhaps well intended but overreaching bill, is to in reality, deny counseling to minors; and now to young adults. This law severely limits the freedom of a counselor to truly offer help to their clients and serves to keep kids and young adults away from the help they need.

Not only are therapists afraid of inadvertently crossing a line, so tend to distance themselves from minor patients who are gender questioning or not see them at all, but parents are also not taking their children to therapists, because they are afraid other issues will be glossed over and their child will be fast tracked to medical intervention as the one and only magic cure for all their ails. It's already happening with kids and this bill would extend it into adulthood.

The vast majority of gender questioning children and young adults in our group, who are taken to a therapist, have other comorbidities. A child may be cutting, suffering with anorexic, be autistic, have OCD, are anxious, are depressed and sometimes even suicidal. But as soon as gender confusion is brought up, that becomes the only thing that is addressed and other issues are in essence swept under the rug. In fact, gender is the only condition counselors are allowed to discuss so it becomes the answer to every child or young adult. Every other reason they are in distress has to be ignored in order to affirm the child's self-diagnosis of gender dysphoria.

The growing number of detransitioners should tell us we are not always getting this right. The statistics, before social media, friend groups and society in general mainstreamed transgenderism, showed that with good counseling and watchful

waiting 80-90% will outgrow their feelings of discomfort in their biological sex by their early adulthood. This bill would prohibit the counseling need to work through those issues.

No matter one's opinion on transgenderism, everyone would most likely admit it is not the easiest road to travel: mentally, socially and especially physically. The physical side effects (infertility, loss of sexual function, loss of bone density, loss of brain development and the complications of dangerous surgeries) alone should give us pause and make us want to be certain the confusion is not caused by something else that needs to be addressed or a social contagion. We have many parents in the group from other states who have walked their child through past trauma and other mental conditions to a place of acceptance of their biological sex. That would not be possible in our state.

Out of 3,300 parents who are questioning, and not generally affirming, we have had NO reported suicides. However, many parents who have taken their kids or young adults to "affirming only" therapists, have been told, even in front of their children, that their child will commit suicide if they don't just blindly affirm. The best studies prove suicide rates are 19x higher than the average 10 years or more AFTER transition. Our kids and young adults need and deserve comprehensive and exploratory mental health