

The story of my son is the story of an injustice that should never have occurred. In late spring of 2020, during the height of the Coronavirus Pandemic, OHSU cold-called my son to encourage him to schedule an orchiectomy—the surgical removal of both his healthy testicles. At the time, he was living as a trans woman.

I learned of the life-altering surgery a few months later when my son returned home, sick with Covid, and full of grief over the surgery. As he would slowly unravel in the ensuing months, I learned more of the “before” story than I’d ever heard while my son was ensconced in trans culture.

I learned that he had been assaulted by so-called high school friends and that he had discovered pornography online when he was a child—both of which were underlying and contributing experiences that would later lead him into trans life. “What did your therapists say about those experiences?” I asked him. I was shocked when he replied that none of the therapists had asked. It had never been dealt with. Obviously, as a parent, I felt horrified and guilty that my child hadn’t told me about the assault and that I hadn’t known about the pornography, but I felt utterly betrayed by therapists and counselors whose only role was to confirm my son’s doubt in himself and to turn his family into the bad guys.

As my son began to detransition, his grief at his losses were agonizing. Growing up, he had always wanted to marry and have a family. Now he could never father children. The physical feeling of the loss of his testes and the accompanying mental anguish was unbearable for him at times.

More time passed, and the knowledge dawned on him that he was now completely dependent on the medical system for the rest of his life. He requires testosterone shots every two weeks if he has a hope of staying healthy. He worries about insurance and where he lives. He worries about emergency situations and the future. None of these things were really made clear to him before the surgery. They tell you it’s so easy, a boy can be a girl, a girl can be a boy. This happy, rosy picture is celebrated and held up. It’s not true.

Then there’s his ripped up chest. You think that having breast implants is not permanent like an orchiectomy, but it is. They scrape your muscle from your bone and slide the silicone under. Reattaching the muscle, he was told by the surgeon who removed the silicone implants, is difficult, more expensive, and may not work.

My son never wanted the surgeries, but he was ultimately talked into them by the so-called therapists he saw. He was always hoping to find someone who would tell him the truth—that he was okay the way he was. The name changes could be undone (he changed his name legally seven times), but believe me, the surgeries cannot. If anyone had sought to find out why my son felt uncomfortable with himself by asking questions and listening to him, all of these things could have been avoided.

And if the Oregon Health Plan didn’t pay 100% for all of these surgeries, I also know my son wouldn’t have gone through with it. He has told me so. They don’t, by the way, pay for the silicone breasts to come out. It is a broken system that is maiming our children and lining pockets of surgeons with the public’s hard-earned money.

My son was 19 or 20 when people began suggesting he was trans, but the epidemic is spreading to younger and younger children and negating the rights of parents. It is reaching into

schools, and people like me whose own child has suffered, are being forced to go along with this damaging philosophy and to be an accomplice in hiding from parents what parents have a right to know. And this is why I must submit my testimony anonymously, for fear of losing my job.

Children, as well as teenagers and young adults, have brains that are not yet fully-formed. Adolescence has always been a trying time when we question who we are. Please, recognize it is not a time to engage in irreversible procedures such as HRT and surgeries. It's just not. And it is devastating to tie the hands of doctors, therapists, and others by suggesting that anything other than "trans celebration" is "conversion" therapy.

I am grateful that my son finally came home, found a good therapist, and is himself again. However, if our society wasn't so eager to change bodies rather than improve mental health, my son's situation and future would be much brighter. Please help save countless others from the grief and endless medical dependence by taking a hard look at what HRT, surgeries, and confirmation therapy really mean.
Thank you.