

I am a mother of a 21 year old daughter. I am writing this testimony anonymously because people on the Left have been bullied and verbally and physically attacked for opposing the rapid onset of transgender ideology and some of its language within our culture. So much so, that people have lost or been fearful of losing their jobs and/or damaged their relationships with their children just for doing so.

I am grateful for the Affordable Care Act; however there are a few flaws with it. One of them being the mandate to cover gender affirming health care and not restricting the use of puberty blockers/hormones/surgeries on children/teens. The drug companies lobbied Congress to get this into the ACA. Once it passed in 2010, drug companies and some doctors jumped on the opportunity to profit from the gender dysphoria of children, teens and adults. There were no restrictions on providing this "treatment" to children and so the marketing increased and then the number of children/teens identifying as transgender increased. There has been a 4000% increase in girls identifying as boys in the past 10 years. Advertising works.

I am a lifelong voting Democrat and I live in Multnomah County. I know many Democrats, like myself, who are disappointed with the Democratic Party push to pass transgender/gender identity laws that conflict with the sex-based rights of women/girls. I want to use this opportunity to state that the definition of "gender identity" is not the same as the definition of "sex" so adding "gender identity" to any existing sex-based law conflicts with the sex-based rights of women/girls. Along similar lines, the rush to add "gender identity" to the Oregon conversion therapy ban law back in 2015 was not well researched to consider how much "gender identity" was being marketed online to children and their parents.

I have witnessed dozens of my daughter's high school friends suddenly claim they are non-binary or transgender, most of them girls. My daughter came to me as a high school freshman saying she wanted to use they/them pronouns. I ignorantly thought she meant she just wanted to be gender non-conforming and I said that's fine. I asked my feminist friends who are online a lot about this and they warned me.... Do NOT affirm her!! They told me thousands of children and teens are on social media these days getting pro-transgender marketing messages from teens, doctors and drug companies. Many of them start out by calling themselves non-binary, then some begin to think they are trans/the opposite sex. Some of my friends themselves used to think they were trans until they researched it more and they detransitioned/desisted.

Thankfully, I listened to them and was prepared when I went into family therapy with my daughter and she started telling her therapist that she was non-binary and how it bothered her that her parents weren't "affirming" her and using her desired "they/them" pronouns. This was around the time that the Oregon Conversion Therapy Ban law was passed to include gender identity. I have no idea whether my daughter's therapist "affirmed" my daughter's gender identity at that time when they met in private, but I made sure that her therapist knew where I stood on the issue. I told her therapist how there was a huge increase in the number of girls identifying as boys at the school and how this ideology is being marketed to kids on social media. I said I will always accept my daughter's personality and I will always believe in the biological fact that females can never transition into males.

My daughter soon stopped using they/them pronouns and told me she understood that she could never be male back in 2016. Had the new conversion therapy law been in effect longer, my daughter's therapist might have ignored my views as the parent and may have been pressured to more strongly affirm my daughter and/or encourage my daughter to lie to her parents and transition when she has never shown any indication of the rare condition of gender dysphoria. There are many therapists who don't disclose the gender identities of their minor patients to their parents because they've been given bad data regarding the benefits of gender affirming care and disclosure to parents.

The existing Oregon Conversion Therapy Ban statute, ORS 675.850, is so broad and vague it is not clear what is and isn't allowable therapeutic care. I know that some therapists refuse to see minors who are confused about their gender identity because they fear being accused of conversion therapy. Many therapists say this makes it impossible for them to ethically treat children. I've heard detransitioners say they are angered and frustrated that they were denied the ability to talk to a therapist in an open, ethical

way. Being denied this opportunity led them down the wrong path, in some cases with permanent, life altering changes to their bodies that they now regret.

HB 2458 will take the ban that is already causing issues for minors and extend it to all Oregonians. It will put more pressure on therapists to affirm adults when the best practice is cognitive behavioral therapy without automatically affirming their gender/sex confusion. There are so many social pressures to transition and to affirm. Minors and adults deserve the chance to speak to a professional in an ethical, balanced way to explore their gender identity. The existing statute creates a situation where minors are not receiving ethical therapy and many are making permanent, life-changing decisions without the chance to openly and honestly explore their gender identity with a licensed professional.

The existing statute already denies minors the opportunity to receive vital, ethical care from a licensed therapist. Extending it to adults will create more damage. The best solution is to rewrite the existing statute for minors with clearer, more specific language that a) protects minors from abusive and unethical practices, and b) protects their rights to receive ethical care as it relates to gender identity, sexual attraction, feelings, and behavior.

HB 2458 would deny many adult patients and their therapists the freedom to pursue the therapy of their choosing. No other state has a ban like this for adults. I urge you to vote NO on HB 2458.