

My name is Billy Burleigh. I used to be transgender but am no longer. I would like to share my experience from being a little boy, to presenting as a woman, and back to embracing my birth gender.

As a child I had the reoccurring thought that, "God made a mistake, I'm a girl." I prayed before going to bed and, every time I prayed, I asked, "God, please make me a girl before I wake up." If I could have, I would have quickly chosen any path that would have transformed me into a girl.

When I was in my early 20s, I sought help for the disconnect between my mind telling me I was a woman, and my body telling me I was a man. In seeking help and doing my own research, the message I received was that I had to change my body to match my mind. After seeking any other path forward, I decided to take the therapists' encouragement, and the advice I read in journal articles and in books, to change my body.

In my mid to late 20's, I started on a testosterone blocker and estrogen. My emotions were up and down, and my body was changing, but I was supposedly on this new road to happiness and that made me happy.

In my first surgery I had a penile inversion, an Adam's apple shave, and a brow shave. After the surgery, the surgeon and nurses had difficulty stopping the bleeding from my new "vagina." My artificial vagina was packed with gauze and a sandbag was placed on my lower abdomen, but the bleeding did not stop. Later, my mom told me that going into my hospital room was awful. The pungent odor in the room was that of stale blood, my blood. I received a blood transfusion and plasma and, eventually, the bleeding stopped. My two weeks stay in the hospital turned into three weeks stay. But changing my penis to an artificial vagina required two surgeries, so about four months later I was back for part two, labiaplasty. I was desperate for the happiness I believed was ensured me.

After this, I had more body and voice feminization surgeries, but no matter how many I had, every time I looked in the mirror, I saw a man staring back at me. I tried hard to resolve the conflict between my mind and my body, but after seven years of trying, I had more problems at that point than I had when I started on the road of transition. Suicidal thoughts were coming into my mind; I was in a pit of despair. The encouragement I received from my therapists, and the books and journal articles, were wrong. In this pit of despair, I called out to Jesus of Nazareth. I gave my life and all my problems to Him. And at that point, He set me on a road of recovery that no therapist or medical professional was able to do.

In my early 40's, I detransitioned. In changing my legal identification back to male, I went through another surgery. To have female-to-male surgery, the surgeon required approval letters from two therapists. The therapists I saw said that I was not transgender and never should have been diagnosed, nor affirmed, as transgender. They said I was male.

Later in life, after detransitioning, I heard it said that everyone has a need for acceptance, security, and significance. Though I hadn't heard this before, I agreed with this statement, and I started thinking about how I had tried to satisfy these needs in my younger years. I had some problems as a child – I was very skinny, had a speech impediment, had learning difficulties, was not athletic, and I didn't seem to fit in with the other boys. I did, however, seem to fit in well with the girls and I enjoyed playing with them more than I enjoyed playing with the boys. As a boy, I didn't feel accepted or secure, and I most certainly didn't feel significant. But if I were a girl, I believe I would have felt accepted and more secure. And, with my child-like thinking, I may have been more significant. In hindsight I see that I had several underlying problems that reinforced the false thought that I was a girl, including being sexually abused in the sixth grade. The therapists never did uncover, never did delve into, these underlying issues, and my research on transgenderism failed to turn up anything on these needs for acceptance, security, and significance. Transitioning did not help my mental health issues; I still had to deal with them after detransitioning.

In summary, I received gender-affirming health care in my 20's. The therapists affirmed my thoughts that I was a woman trapped in a man's body. As a result, I spent well over \$100,000 on my transition to presenting as female. I'm surgically modified; I have a scared body; I must take weekly testosterone injections, and I can no longer have sex. The bottom line is that receiving gender-affirming health care, and transitioning, did not resolve the childhood issues that I struggled with. I truly wish I would have received mental health care instead of gender affirming health care. I wish the therapists that I saw in my 20's would have questioned my perceived gender identity, my confusion, and sought to help me with the underlying causes, which were my many childhood hurts and pains. Gender affirming mental health care did great harm to me.

Please vote No on HB-2002. Thank you.

Billy Burleigh

Twin Falls, Idaho