

We found out our daughter was being socially transitioned by her elementary school teacher and therapist when she was in 5th grade at 10/11 years old. The therapist and teacher were using male pronouns and a new made up name. This was something my child was trying on like a teen would have tried a style like punk or goth in years past. The problem is that it's hard to get out of once they go down this road, for many reasons, not the least of which are the adults who are encouraging them.

We knew our daughter was being confused by the idea that she might be a boy if she didn't like dresses, dolls, pink or other stereotypically "girly" things. We consequently removed our daughter from all of the influences that were affirming her as a boy. We found a therapist who treated our daughter's real issues and she eventually became comfortable in knowing she is a girl. It took time and serious measures to repair the harm that was caused by an affirming therapist. Later my daughter remarked that the affirming therapist "didn't really help me much." All she seemed to be doing was helping our daughter advocate for herself when someone "misgendered" her (called her a girl) which was causing conflict between my daughter and other students. She didn't address the issues my daughter asked her to help with.

It is exceedingly difficult for a child to reverse course once they have been socially transitioned. Social transition is a powerful psychotherapeutic treatment and it concretizes an identity for a child even though it may not be a permanent identity if the child were left to their own natural exploration. Many of them go on to have medical procedures and take drugs to help them appear like a facsimile of the opposite sex.

Many of these children have some form of vulnerability such as issues due to autism, trauma or difficulty being accepted as a gender stereotype non-conforming child. The idea they may be the opposite sex is packaged in a way that is enticing to children and presented as an answer to all of their problems. When it doesn't solve their issues they often feel they have to level up and do the next, more extreme step with the promise of a "feeling of euphoria" that is short lived or not present at all. Now they have to deal with more medical and mental health issues created by medical "transition" on top of their original mental health issues. It's like they are chasing a rainbow for a pot of gold they will never reach.

We removed our daughter's access to the internet and took her out of public school and found her a therapist who explored with our daughter what might be causing her discomfort. she is now comfortable knowing she is a girl. The exploratory therapist worked in partnership with us and treated us as a whole family unit. Our daughter is now happy and flourishing and we are stronger and closer as a family.

If we had not removed our daughter from all of the influences that were affirming her as a boy at age 10 or 11, she could likely have gone down the path of medicalization. I believe school and medical and mental health professionals would have encouraged it. I have learned that I cannot trust these blindly-affirming professionals with my daughter's medical and mental well-being.

I believe we have only just begun to see the tidal wave of young detransitioners who were irreversibly harmed. I count our daughter as one of the lucky ones, in that we were able to put up guardrails to keep her safe from that particular harm even though the affirming therapist she first saw was working against us. Our daughter is doing well now in large part due to the exploratory therapy that got to the root of her real issues. We are told by many medical and mental health professionals that children "know who they are" and that we should not question our children when they believe they are the opposite sex. My daughter's story goes against this narrative. She has been happily desisted and flourishing for 2 years now. She is in much better mental health than she was when she thought she was a boy.

I am in support groups with thousands of parents who's children are confused about who they are, as my daughter was. We are in the middle of a social contagion. I know many parents who were forced to take drastic measures to keep their children from trans-ideation by removing them from influences that were confusing them. These kids desist and become comfortable as their sex. Many parents don't know this is a possibility because they were misled by mental and medical health professionals. Many of these kids have gone down a medical path only to regret it later. This bill has the potential to leave these confused children vulnerable to irreversible, medical harm. Please protect them. Please vote No on HB 2002.

Thank you,
Jennifer Dellasega