

Good afternoon Senator Carney, Representative Moonen and other lovely people of the Judiciary committee. My name is Amber Lavigne of Newcastle. I am here today to testify in opposition to LD 1735.

I am the Mother of a child struggling with gender dysphoria. As a young girl, my daughter never showed signs of being gender non-conforming. Though this is anecdotal, I can't help but reflect back on moments in my daughter's life as I help her through this season. I remember when her younger cousin started her period before her. My daughter spent the following months complaining about phantom period cramps, clearly demonstrating jealousy that her baby cousin had entered womanhood before her. I also reflect back on my own childhood. I remember at about the same age my daughter is now, I was struggling with body image. Like many girls, as I reached puberty, I hyperfocused on my weight. I was able to obtain diet pills, and began obsessively taking them, ingesting far more than the recommended dosage. I also remember feeling like I would rather poison myself with these pills and potentially die prematurely and be thin, than to live a much longer life, if I were what I would have considered fat. I was fortunate enough to have parents who intervened and helped me to explore ways to love my beautiful body as it is, and that destroying my body based on the feeling that I was fat was incredibly harmful. I had people in my life who helped me to understand that feelings are just that, feelings, not facts, and I began to explore more appropriate ways to deal with my body dysmorphia.

I worry that bills like this will create barriers to parents exploring appropriately with their children their struggles with mental health. It worries me to think that parents like myself who support their children in age appropriate ways and don't immediately affirm their children based solely on a feeling that may be temporary, will lose their babies. As you listen to testimony today, you will hear from people who have fallen victim to those who have led them to believe that there is only one fix to the struggles they are experiencing. Though we acknowledge that gender dysphoria is a mental illness as outlined in the DSM5-TR, it is the only mental illness we have a one size fits all model to treat-complete enmeshment.

As we watch countries like Sweden and the U.K. take a U-turn on gender affirmation based on actual comprehensive studies and the shut down of the infamous Tavistock clinic due to fast tracked gender affirmation, here in the states we are hearing advocates for putting kids on medical conveyer belts before they can even begin to understand what these procedures are doing to their beautiful bodies. There are absolutely ways to support your babies as their authentic selves as they explore their identities, and that does not include medical intervention, removing healthy body parts and providing puberty blockers and hormones that cause life-long medical problems. As I listen to the program director of OUTMaine compare gender identity to a child's favorite Celtics player or favorite color I can't help but shake my head with confusion. 13 year old Amber's favorite color was green, 38 year old Amber's favorite color is yellow. And that has changed dozens of times in the years between.

As a Mom, I've been fed the lies-you can have a living son, or a dead daughter. Much like watching my daughter's mental health status slowly decline as she stepped into public school, I have watched my child's mental health improve significantly as she has been removed from the secret supposed care she was receiving from a 26 year old social worker at her public school. This bill removes the only people who will love these children without condition from their lives-their parents. As you will hear from people who have been victims of gender affirming care, you will also hear how abandoned they were by their community, the same community who says they will love them just as they are, as soon as they decided they no longer wanted to live the life of a transgender person. The only people left to catch

them and help to pick up the pieces were the people who love them without condition-their parents.
Please vote to protect our beautiful children in this beautiful state. Vote ought not pass LD 1735.

