

Roberta Manter
Fayette
LD 1735

We have laws that require a person to reach a certain age before they can do certain things that might endanger their life or health, or the life or health of others. Beyond that, we trust parents to know their children and to know what is best for them. For example, a parent may determine that their child is not yet ready to get their driver's license. They may still be too distractible, not sufficiently responsible, or they may not have reached a level of maturity where they are able to withstand peer pressure to engage in dangerous behaviors. So why would we think that it's appropriate to allow a child to make a decision that will affect the rest of their life, that will require lifelong medical intervention, and that is irreversible if they should later change their mind? Or why would we think it's appropriate to allow someone other than the parent to influence that decision when there may be some motive at work other than the best interest of that child? When I was young I thought I'd rather be a boy. I thought boys got to do all the fun stuff. I had no interest in playing with dolls, preferring to hang out with my friend Jimmy and play in the dirt with his trucks. Jimmy sometimes liked to pretend he was a girl. His mother went so far as to buy him a dress to wear. When we played house, he would be the mom and I would be the dad. But no one ever suggested we should actually change our sex, thank God! Jimmy grew up, got married, and he and his wife had two fine sons. I have been happily married to my husband for 42 years, and the crowning achievement of my life is the daughter we raised. She grew up playing football with the neighborhood boys, and took pride in being able to beat most of them at arm wrestling. She is now married, and she and her husband have three beautiful children. All of that could have been missed if anyone had led us to believe we were "trapped in the wrong body" and encouraged us to actually try to change our sex. There were days when my oldest grand daughter said she was iron man. Her dad taught her knife throwing, and she has studied survival skills, including building a snow shelter and camping out in it for a week in the middle of winter. But she is becoming a lovely young lady. There are days when my grandson tries out being spider man. Other days he says he is a dinosaur, or a dragon. Other days he says he is a bulldozer. I'm sure he will outgrow all of those fantasies. Why would we think it's any more appropriate to expect a child to know what sex they want to be than to let them choose what species they want to be? It's one thing to pretend, or even to enjoy things more often associated with the opposite sex. My husband loves cooking and has done some awesome embroidery. But he is a man, no doubt about it. I hate cooking and housework, and I haven't worn a dress in years. I'm more comfortable shoveling horse manure, and at 71 years of age I can still wield a chain saw or a wood splitting ax. But I am proud to be a mother and grand mother, and I'm ever so glad I was not encouraged to pursue my desire to become a boy when I was not at an age to fully understand the long term ramifications of such a decision. Please, let's not lead young ones astray. They may forever regret a decision they cannot undo.