

Good morning, Senator Carney, Representative Monnen, and other lovely members of the judiciary committee. My name is Amber Lavigne of Newcastle. I am here today as a concerned mom to speak in support of LD 678.

I recently spoke with a mom of a young woman. When her daughter was in the fourth grade, she went to several school employees to request that they use a masculine name and pronouns. What did the school employees do, you may ask. The school employees called her mom. They asked her mom for guidance. Her mom told them to continue to utilize the name she was given at birth, and pronouns that correspond with her sex. The school did just that. Today, that young lady is a beautiful, happy, thriving mom. A mom who is so thankful that school officials didn't follow her lead and leave her family out of a very difficult conversation. Who knows where that young lady would be today if the school didn't include the people who knew her best in the conversation, her parents.

Several weeks ago, I sat in a committee hearing room waiting for the hearing to kick off, listening to a group of people discussing their kids' names. They discussed the long process it took to name their kids. They discussed the deeper meaning behind those names. I looked around the room and saw pride in those parents' eyes as they joked with one another. I sat on the other side of the room, fighting tears. As a mom of a kid struggling with gender dysphoria, I don't get to celebrate my kid's name. I don't even get to use her name without being accused of "deadnaming" my 13-year-old baby. You see, this is a culture of death. Dead names, dead family, dead friends, dead memories, dead photographs, threats of death if we don't affirm.

Social transition is the initial step. Next comes puberty blockers, then cross sex hormones and surgeries. For many, before they even enter adulthood.

Before transgenerism became mainstream, kids did not socially transition. They were instead offered therapy that helped them work through what was making them feel so distressed. For most, this led to living a happy life aligned with their born sex.

I was here testifying against several other bills last week regarding gender affirming care. As I looked around the room at the young people testifying for the bill to pass, I couldn't help but notice one common theme among most of these beautiful young people: Arrested development. These kids were isolated during their social awakening due to COVID. Many adopted new identities online and became hyperfocused on those identities. It was the only social interactions they received outside of family. Instead of finding ways to get these young adults to work through this distress, we are celebrating their distress as they tote with them teddy bears and other stuffed animals as coping mechanisms. I can't help but wonder what the future holds for them. It's an elephant in the room nobody wants to discuss.

As parents, our number one priority is to prepare our kids for the real world. To prepare them to be successful, independent, contributing members of society. There are ways to support quirky uniqueness while also helping these kids understand appropriate etiquette in the real world. How seriously would I be taken today if I stood before you holding my childhood teddy to my chest as I spoke? We eventually have to put away childish things.

I ask you again to do what the people of Maine want. Please stop omitting parents from our kids' lives. As these kids grow into adulthood the love bombing will stop, and what will be left will be a family, torn apart by distress and mistreatment. We parents will be there to pick up the pieces, but at what cost?

The house voted to pass a bill, LD 394, to allow social workers to keep information from parents
Pass this bill so that we can draw a line somewhere Changing pronouns goes beyond privileged
communication It is an action step toward a medical conveyer belt of medical treatment our kids
can't even begin to comprehend Please vote ought to pass LD 678