

Grace Altmiller
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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am honored to be able to testify my own experiences to the Committee. My name is Grace Altmiller, and I am from Herndon, Virginia. I am here to share my disapproval of this bill, and my reasoning for my opposition. As a transgender teen, in high school I struggled in figuring out not only who I wanted to be, but also who I was and had been. I found out that going by a different, less feminine name, Cal, made me feel more comfortable expressing myself and confident to discover more about myself. This simple act and the support of the teachers and staff around me encouraged and uplifted me to want to be myself, to be proud of myself. I know of countless other kids who went through the same experience, albeit with differing levels of support from their teachers. It strikes me as odd that we are choosing to attack a small choice made by kids to feel more comfortable in themselves, especially a choice that harms no one. Schools are supposed to be a place of nourishing and helping, and to tell a kid that their comfort is wrong, that who they feel like is unlawful, is contradictory to the love and acceptance we are supposed to be giving them. If this law passes, countless kids will grow up being ashamed of who they are, and feeling unsupported and unheard by the adults and mentors around them. The support given to me by my teachers made the difference between a scary, strange, lost feeling and a new, revitalizing, period of self-discovery. I truly hope that you take my words and experiences into consideration. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" for all the children of today and tomorrow, just like me, just looking for a hand to help guide and support them. Thank you again for your time.