

To the honorable members of the House State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee:

As a child, I easily aligned myself with the boys around me. I would roughhouse with them, play sports, and participate in games that were assigned for "boys." Masculinity was a strong factor in my upbringing, and it's always what made the most sense to me.

Despite this, when I began puberty, my body rejected that idea. I gained "feminine" attributes, and suffered because of this. I felt completely disconnected from who I truly was, and the further along I went into puberty, the more dissonance occurred within my body.

When I was 14, I found the term that matched what I was feeling: transgender. Throughout my life, I had been experiencing gender dysphoria - distress caused by my manhood being at odds with the female body I was assigned at birth. Even though I was only a middle schooler, I had never felt more confident in my identity. Identifying as a transgender man felt so innate and natural.

Through great prayer and reflection, I began my social transition when I was 16, and soon after, began hormone replacement therapy. I was blessed with affirming care providers in my hometown who saw my physical distress and gave me the proper medication to treat it. Through taking testosterone, I began to feel like my body was my own, and that I wasn't stuck trying to fulfill the female role that I could never live up to for one simple reason - I'm not a female.

Now, at the age of 22, I'm able to pursue my degree at DU without the stress of being completely distraught over my body. Even though dysphoria still exists, being able to begin transitioning as a minor greatly reduced the daily pain and suffering I would experience. Unfortunately, though, my relief is all too rare. Thousands of trans minors are unable to afford or access the medication they need to heal the wounds of dysphoria, and the wait to get affirming healthcare can be extremely dangerous. Denying the right to the pursuit of happiness through denying healthcare leads people to consider self harm or suicide, illegal and unmonitored usage of hormones, and more.

The right to access is *crucial* for an already vulnerable population. HB 20-1114 doesn't prevent mutilation or sterilization - it prevents medicine from being delivered. It prevents relief from being achieved. It prevents peace from being

gained. I pray that this committee sees that healthcare is a right anyone should be able to access - whether someone is a minor or not.

Thank you for your time,

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