

House Public Health Care & Human Services Committee:

I am writing to you today concerning SB20-221. This issue is near and dear to my heart. I have attached pictures of two of the dearest LGBTQ+ people I know at the end of my testimony. My eldest child and one of my best friends. They are, however, not the only ones I know this bill will impact. You will be hearing from plenty from them I am sure. I just found out this morning that SB20-221 is being heard today. I wish I could make it down today to testify myself, so please enter this into record and please read aloud in committee.

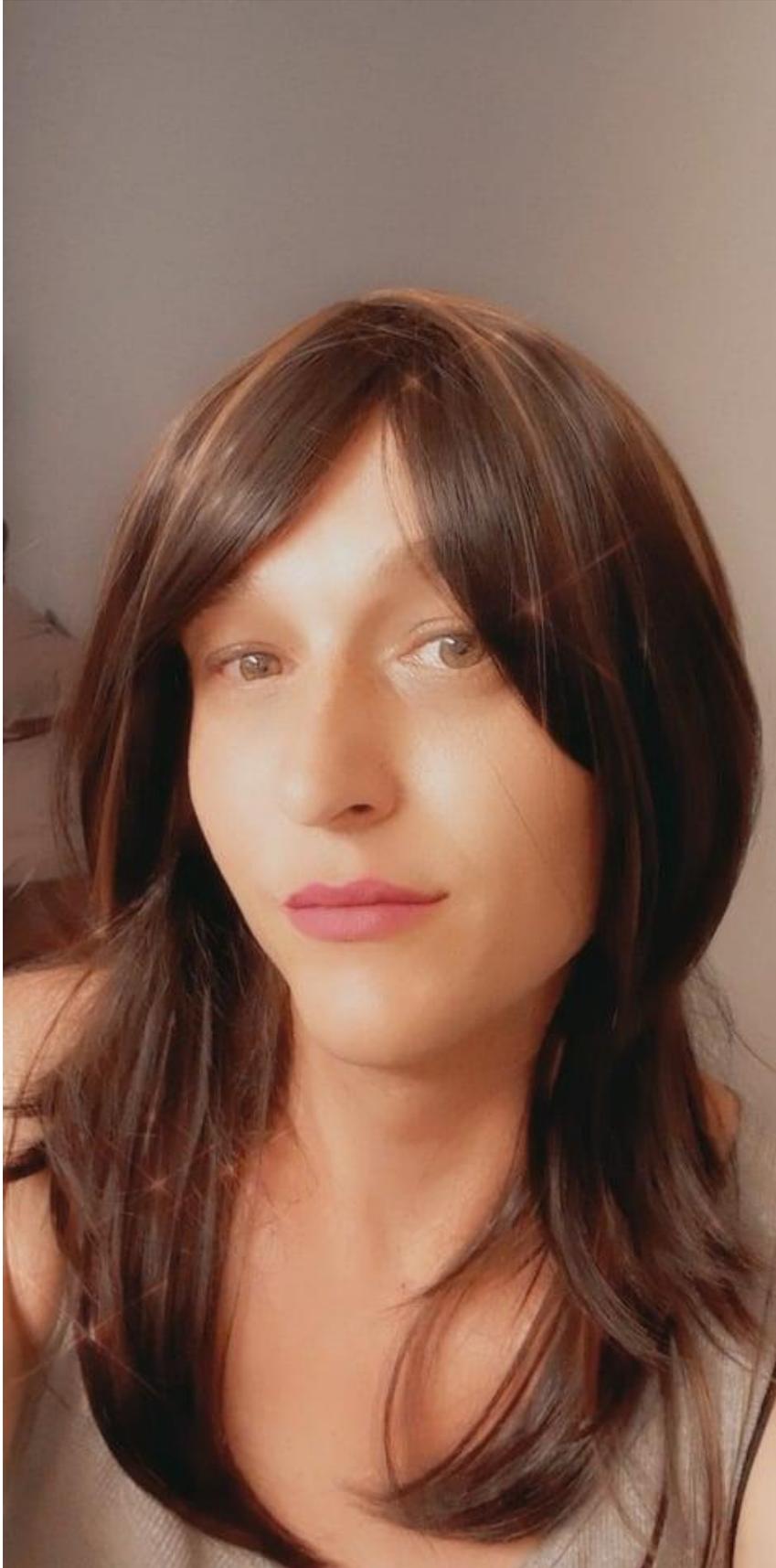
My eldest is non-binary; they go by the pronouns they, them and their. They were part of the Class of 2020. My eldest is chronologically an adult, but as most everyone will agree 18 is still very much a child. I lovingly call them Monkey-kin, another story I would gladly elaborate on, but now is not the time. Two years ago, they came to me and let me know their gender is not what I have been calling them for 16 years. I am still trying to get their pronouns correct. It is like rewiring the brain, but is harder to do when you are also battling a TBI like I am. Monkey-kin, does not deserve to live in fear that someone may take offense to who they are and use that as an excuse to legally do them harm. Lord knows they have already gone through enough.

My friend, I have spoken about to the House State, Veterans & Military Affairs committee already this year during the "Slate of Hate," Dana is a transgender woman. I am happy to report that she did come out to her parents, and there was a happy ending to her story, for the most part. She has been going through HRT treatments, since I last addressed legislators earlier this year, and I have never seen her happier. Her stutter is almost gone as well. Unfortunately, where she currently lives, hardly anyone is accepting of her. If the situation does not change, she may be looking for a new home. Her options will be limited to where she can be safe. Having a law on the books that says someone is on the right side of the fence to harm her just because of who she is, will not be one of them. Unfortunately, that is currently most of the nation, including CO. I still cannot fathom that it is still legal to cause harm because of hate.

The question ultimately is, is this who we are as a state? Do we allow harm to happen to innocent victims just for who they are? If they otherwise pose no other threat, is it justifiable? Our current laws say so, but your constituents are saying it is not. It is not like they have a disease and are deliberately attempting to spread and take out as many people as they can. Ignorance, causing fear, is no excuse to cause harm to someone, and we should make laws to reflect that. After all, the saying is, ignorance is no excuse not to follow the law. Shouldn't we also have laws to combat ignorance? Please help me, and the rest of CO say, "We see you, and see your value. Here is not a place where violence against you is going to happen, without repercussions." Please vote in favor of SB20-221. This is our time to lead the nation once again on civil rights. Let us be the example to follow.



Monkey-kin



Dana

Sincerely,

Autumn Brooks

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