

Members of the House Human Services Committee, my name is Camille Kiefel and I am asking that you move forward with a do pass for House Bill 1254. I am, as I know you are, concerned about the wellbeing of those suffering from gender dysphoria, especially children. I've come here today to share my story in hopes of preventing this from happening to others.

Prior to my transition, I had spent 20 years of mental health therapy with conventional modalities. I didn't respond well to medications, saw a gender therapist, and had two rounds of TMS (transcranial magnetic stimulation therapy). I was diligent and wanting to heal- but nothing my doctors offered had healed me because they always saw my issue strictly as a mental one.

I was 30 and at the end of my rope when I transitioned. At the time I believed I was non-binary. I struggled with severe mental illness and suicidal ideation. I had a trauma history: when I was in 6th grade, my best friend had been raped by her brother. Being a girl meant I was vulnerable. I started to present more masculine.

This should have been a red flag. Yet within a few months of requesting top surgery, it was performed on me. I developed complications after my surgery. There were many times I didn't know if I would make it through the night.

If I made this mistake as an adult, a young girl could, too. Not only did my surgery exacerbate my mental health issues. I now struggle with physical complications as well. Presenting and taking on another gender was a way for me to escape womanhood. Escape is not a valid way of dealing with trauma; You will have to deal with it eventually.

I was able to work through these difficult emotions and improve my mental health through a holistic approach. I had physical health issues that had been previously overlooked. Had that been managed, I would have never gotten the surgery. This surgery was an abhorrent misdiagnosis. The goal of healthcare should always be to get to the root cause of the problem.

Today I am more grounded than I have been my entire life, but I am mutilated. Between my carved-up body and the physical complications, I often question if there's anything on the other side. Where my breasts were are hollow. I can never get them back. I can never fit a dress the same way again. I can never breastfeed. Who will love me?

You know what keeps me going? Stopping this from happening to someone else.

Thank you for your time. You all have a lot to consider, and I know you will make the right decision.