

House Bill 1254 is a bill that intentionally targets a very small group of people, trans youth, who already face a much higher rate of suicide and homicide in this country. 1254 joins a wave of anti trans legislation in the State of North Dakota, attempting to criminalize a minority for their very existence. The sponsors of this bill have no authority to control the lives of their transgender constituents so they try in vain to legislate them out of existence. Not only is this impossible but it is antithetical to the small government approach supposedly favored by the conservative caucus.

I can't speak to the legality of a bill like this, although I'm sure many attorneys today will. I can't speak to its medical implications, but I know there are doctors and mental healthcare providers pleading with you to vote against this bill. If all of their expertise is meaningless to you, I can only offer my testimony as someone whose lived experience as a transgender person raised in North Dakota is relevant here.

What you seek to do in passing HB 1301 will kill children. I know because I barely survived growing up trans in North Dakota. I barely survived adulthood as a trans person here. While living in North Dakota and being subjected to multiple assaults and hate crimes, I attempted to take my own life just shy of a dozen times. Since I moved to Minneapolis in 2016 and gotten hormone replacement therapy and gender affirming surgeries, I have not attempted to take my own life a single time. I feel safe here in a way I never did in Bismarck or Fargo for the 25 years I spent there.

Hormone blockers are already prescribed to plenty of children for precocious puberty. Hormone supplements like estrogen are prescribed in the form of birth control, and I knew young men in high school who, as puberty hadn't reached them yet, were prescribed testosterone or human growth hormone to start their puberty. As a young person, I knew I was trans without having the language for it. I told every person who would listen to me from the age of 3 on that I wasn't a girl. I could have avoided my mastectomy if I had been able to get on puberty blockers instead. I could have avoided all the violence I did to myself.

If you vote for this bill, there are children who will choose to end their lives instead of suffering this violence and bigotry. If I were you, there is not one more word of testimony I would need to hear.

I doubt many of you will read what I'm saying to you. I know it isn't as powerful when I can't be there in person to stare you in the eyes and ask you to recognize my humanity. But I am a human being, and so are the children who will die as a result of your hate. Reconsider what you're doing, or live to regret the children you've sent to their graves.