

DO NOT PASS ON HB 1254

Chair Lee and members of the Senate Human Services Committee:

I urge you DO NOT PASS HB 1254. I am the founder of an organization called Project RAI, we work with gender queer children ages 3-14. We work to provide them resources, advocacy, and community so kids are able to when feeling lonely and reduce the risk of suicide.

Kids in our program have known they were gender queer from a young age. Research shows that children start realizing this as early as three years old. I have had the absolute pleasure of meeting kids that attend Project RAI events who are confident, self-assured and are living their most authentic lives as their authentic selves. Our kids just want to be kids and live their childhood as who they know they are.

Health care for queer and trans youth involves a robust healthcare team, therapy, and consultation with experts who understand the unique needs of growing children. Those opposed to trans healthcare would say that children are being mutilated, tricked, and manipulated by some "liberal agenda", which cannot be farther from the truth. In reading the many of the letters submitted today, I was really moved by the healthcare experts who are incredibly concerned that the government is stepping into something they have no business or expertise in.

Healthcare decisions need to remain between a family and their provider, not the government. Rates of teen suicide are higher for trans and queer kids, especially when they have no support system. I hate to think what will happen in North Dakota if our queer kids are forced to stay hidden and not celebrated as their cis peers.

Again, I urge a DO NOT PASS on this bill.