

Submitter: Jack Dresser

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2002

I'm a retired psychologist who specialized in child and family therapy. This bill is appalling. Identity-- including sexual identity -- is not firmly established for most in mid-adolescence. Our deepest peer attachments in childhood are usually with friends of our own gender, and homosexual experiments are not uncommon. Sexual identity formation typically requires an extended period of physical and psychological maturation and experience. There's good reason why the age of legal majority for almost everything is 18, and even that is premature for many people. Brain development, especially the hippocampus and prefrontal cortex, is incomplete before the early 20s. Research has shown that indices of mature judgement about basic choices continues to develop into the early 20s. There are many cases of "buyer's remorse" among transsexuals who have prematurely chosen surgical alteration that alters the entire future trajectory of their lives. A surgical solution is often motivated by fear of homosexuality, but the gay and lesbian communities have well-established social networks and are widely accepted by the wider culture, and a "normal" physical appearance can significantly affect many aspects of one's future life. Allowing irreversible self-mutilating elective surgery before the age of majority would be irresponsible in the extreme and in future court actions might well be ruled child abuse and neglect.