

Submitter: Taylor Doren

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Judiciary

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4088

Throughout my life, I have navigated government, health, and social systems that repeatedly signaled that my identity made me less deserving of dignity, safety, or basic humanity. As a young person growing up amid pervasive transphobia and homophobia, I internalized those messages so deeply that I experienced suicidal ideation and came to believe that being queer and gender non-conforming made me unworthy of living. Those beliefs were not innate; they were taught — reinforced by institutions that should have protected me.

It has only been within the past 15 years, as gender-affirming care has become more accessible and more widely understood, that I have been able to recognize that I have the same right to exist and to thrive as anyone else. Access to affirming mental health and medical care has helped me unlearn the shame that was imposed on me by larger systems of oppression, not by anything inherent to who I am.

I support this bill because it represents a necessary step toward correcting those longstanding harms. It moves us away from policing how individuals are allowed to express themselves and away from the false assumption that anyone other than the individual knows what is best for their own life. Legislation like this helps ensure that people are not forced to merely survive in the margins, but are given the freedom, dignity, and autonomy to thrive.