

This bill is a blatant attempt to strip rights away from an already vulnerable group of our population. Persons with either cisgender or transgender identities deserve to live and flourish in their communities—with freedom to learn, work, love, and play—and build lives connected with others at home, in the work place, and in public settings without fear for their safety and survival. The decision to use pronouns one is comfortable with, or even take steps toward transitioning are deeply personal decisions and should be the prerogative of the individual and deserve the law’s protection.

Those who don’t believe in the validity of gender identity often view it as a choice. The United States protects religious freedom in the First Amendment, and religion is quintessentially a choice. We owe the same respect to all members of our communities. We don’t yet know if gender identity emerges from genes, hormones, environmental factors or, most likely, an intricate combination of all these factors and more. It is unlikely that people with a transgender identity simply choose their gender identity, any more than cisgender people do. However, it is crucial that associated choices about the expression of gender—affecting vital aspects of identity in school, the workplace, and the community—are supported by our laws and policies.

The list of lobbyists clearly shows how lopsided this issue is (far and away against this) and the organizations for this bill tout phrases like “innocence”. Children experience gender dysphoria too, this is not a matter of innocence.

Our elected officials have no right to strip our protections and rights. The people they’re aiming at today are ‘equal’ members of our communities and deserve to be treated as such.

I urge our elected officials to vote against this bill.

Jon Ely