

Hello, my name is Chris Morse, and my pronouns are she/they. I'm 40 years old. I recently celebrated my 14th year with Wells Fargo. My wife and I have been together for about a decade, and our homestead is just northwest of here. We are the mothers of two smart and kind kiddos, 17 and 12. I'm also a student at Drake University, studying both management and religion. Go Drake Bulldogs!

If you kept listening after I shared my pronouns, you'll understand—I don't have time to waste.

And I imagine the same is true for many of you. I know for a fact it's true for your constituents. So I have to ask: Why are we all here wasting our time on this?

House Study Bill 242 is unconstitutional. The Supreme Court decided in *Romer v. Evans* (1996) that you can't strip civil rights protections from a group just because you don't like them. Whether you like it or not, this body agreed in 2007 to protect genderqueer individuals like myself under the Iowa Civil Rights Act. Removing those protections is itself a violation of our civil rights. It won't hold up in court.

So what are we doing here? Why are we wasting time—my time, your time, the people's time—on this?

Maybe you already know this. Maybe you're hoping to overturn more case law, hoping to strip people like me of our God-given rights to pursue happiness and live our lives in peace. But in case you need reminding—that's called liberty. It is a core tenet of this nation and this state. And history has proven time and again: prohibition doesn't stop people from existing.

It won't stop people like me from continuing to live, love, and thrive as bearers of God's image. Because we are all made in the image and likeness of God, aren't we? If you believe that, then trans people—like all people—reflect something of God. Not just in the ways we are similar, but also in the ways we are different.

So why are you doing this? Why are you wasting the people's time othering your beloved siblings in Christ?

I want to be considerate of others who wish to speak today, so I'll leave you with this. Yesterday in church, we read Psalm 37, and it gave me the kind of hope I only find in my relationship with the true and living God:

"Do not fret because of evildoers... for they shall soon wither like grass and fade away... The Lord laughs at the wicked, for he sees that their day will come. The wicked draw their sword and bend their bow to strike down the poor and the needy, to slaughter those who are upright in their ways. But their sword shall go through their own heart, and their bow shall be broken."

In more secular terms: injustice doesn't stand forever.

Mr./Madam Chair, members of the committee, I ask you to stand up against evil today. Do not let your leadership's misplaced priorities compel you to advance this hateful bill. Your time in these halls should be spent funding our public schools, protecting our drinking water, and properly managing our parks and recreation areas.

This bill is a waste of time.

And now, if you'll excuse me—I have an exam in a few hours, and I need to pick up my kids from school by 5.