

I want to tell you the story of a young girl named Skyler.

Skyler was born to loving parents, Jack and Melissa, in Waverly, IA. The family struggled with poverty, and life was not kind. She had a younger sister, who went into a coma from a rare brain infection when Skyler was in first grade and no one knew if Callie would ever wake up.

As Callie recovered and medical debt piled up, the family moved school districts in search of better opportunities. A mere 11 months later, as a nine year old, Skyler was awoken by screams and being slung over her dad's shoulder as he carried her to safety - wading through knee deep flood water. The family watched as their home and all of their possessions were swallowed whole.

The family was without a place to go: no clothes, no food, no toys and no way for anyone to get in or out of Clarksville, yet the local community provided. Shortly after, the family moved to Janesville - the third home and school district in three consecutive years.

Despite this volatile upbringing, Skyler devoted her life to giving back to the community. At 14, she began working to help support her now three younger sisters. Through all of this, she was active in the church, regularly volunteered, and always offered a helping hand to anyone in need. She dreamed of one day being the first in her family to go to college.

Fast forward and Skyler was valedictorian, got a full ride scholarship, graduated from UNI with multiple majors and now works her dream job. She met a great man, got married, bought a house, started a business, and to this day, dreams of raising a family in the Iowa communities that raised her.

Skyler is loved by thousands in Northeast Iowa and across the state.

Let me introduce myself: I'm Skyler, and my pronouns are they/them. This is my story. My life.

And if you feel differently about me now than you did about Skyler -about me - 10 seconds ago, it's because you are willfully denying the humanity of transgender people.

Does my hair, the clothes I wear, and the words people use to describe me negate my right to protection from discrimination as your delegate? I implore you to see my humanity and vote no to HSB 242. Thank you.