

Testimony in Opposition to HB 2791

Hello, and thank you to the committee for your time today. My name is Anthony Alvarez. I am nineteen years old, a proud Kansan of 10 years, a constituent of Wyandotte County, an honors student at KU, and a transgender man.

As a child, I struggled with intense anger and depression, which, to me and my parents, seemed unexplainable. It was only when I realized I was transgender at the age of fifteen that I was able to put a name to the discomfort that overshadowed my life.

When I shared this with my parents, they were thoughtful but skeptical and insisted that we meet with healthcare professionals to explain what it was I was feeling. My parents have since then told me that when I first came to them, they felt out of their depth and scared they could not support me. It was only after meeting with these professionals that they were able to understand what I was going through, and together with them at sixteen, I began my transition as a minor in the state of Kansas.

I was fortunate to have open-minded parents and an accepting school surrounding me when I began this process, and since then, I have grown into a young man my parents and I are proud of. Everyone who has known me since before my transition reports a radical positive change within me. My friends tell me I smile wider. I'm more confident and self-assured.

It pains me to think that the support systems that made me who I am today could be denied to other young Kansans by bills like this one. HB 2791 would have robbed me of the opportunity to talk to an experienced doctor and would have robbed my parents of the knowledge of what their son was going through. It would have banned my public school from making basic but necessary accommodations for me. Without that help, it would have made an already difficult process almost impossible. When I think about how satisfied I am with my gender transition, I remember the people in my school, in doctor's offices, and in other institutions who helped me, and it is painful to think that the Kansas legislature wants to take that away from young transgender Kansans.

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I urge the members of this committee to think about the young transgender Kansans in your care when you vote on this bill. I used to believe that I would never be happy, but now I wake up every day excited and can see my future clearly, a future I hope is in the state of Kansas. With your help, we can keep this possible for other transgender kids like me.