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A MESSAGE FROM YOUR TRANSGENDER PEERS



The transgender bill from Indiana I wrote about in [this article](#) has now spread to Iowa—that article mentions terms you may need to know. The basics of this bill you need to know is if someone tells a teacher they are trans or differently-aligned with their sex, that teacher has to tell the child's parents. Students did a major walkout a week ago in protest of the bill.

The schools that participated were: Johnston, Ankeny, Ames, West Des Moines, Storm Lake, Des Moines, Waukee, Marion, Urbandale, Iowa City, Fort Dodge, Bettendorf, and Iowa State University.

If this legislation passes (or is signed into law), many communities, including ours, will be deeply affected. As we all know, I am very against this bill. It's terrifying to me, and I have a good relationship with my mother from a trans standpoint. I fear for my peers who have a lesser-accepting household. I wanted to get a word from other people, however.

I interviewed an anonymous transgender student—one of your peers. Someone you go to school with everyday. Someone who is scared for their future.

Question: Do your parents know you're trans?

Trans Student: No, my parents are not aware that I am trans, though they have found out about me thinking I was in the past.

Q: Do you think they would accept you?

TS: I am not sure, it's a risk I can't afford to take. While everything might turn out just fine, I don't want to risk not having a home to go to or having my life completely uprooted from where it stands now.

Q: Why are you afraid to come out?

TS: I am afraid to come out because I don't know how people will react. Most people have and will welcome me with open arms but I fear the very [authoritative] voices will do everything they can to try to stop me. I just want to be accepted as a human being, not as some oddity.

Q: Have you seen transphobia at our school, with students or teachers?

TS: I have seen transphobia. It's not taking the "stereotypical" form of direct aggression or physical bullying; it takes a very subtle but hurtful approach. A joke about being an attack helicopter/some sort of animal/etc. A comment about how the "trans agenda" wants to "turn everyone trans." Using a slur as a punchline to a joke.

Q: Have you been bullied for being trans?

TS: I have been in the past. It was from people I considered to be my closest friends. They took my coming out to them as a personal offense. They isolated me from everyone and then left me with no one left. I was completely alone with no one who would be able to understand, and also alone with the threat that they would tell everyone if I spoke out. There was no winning; either I dealt with their abuse, or I told everyone [that I was trans].

Q: Do you know anything about this bill?

TS: I know a lot about this bill. It's not unique to just Indiana. Iowa is trying to input its own bills quite similar to the ones in Indiana. Many other states are following suit claiming it will "help the kids." They don't seem to understand how it might hurt someone even more.

Q: What are your thoughts on this bill?

TS: It's scary to me. Kids turn to teachers when they have no one left to go to. They want that safety that is provided, but these bills are threatening to rip it all away in one go. It's so scary to imagine going home one day and not finding the comfort that everyone needs. This bill helps no one besides abusers by fueling their endless supply of hate.

Q: Do you fear for the future of trans people?

TS: I truly do fear for trans people. We aren't trying to hurt anyone, but recently bill after bill has been put forth to shove us out of the closet, to ban us from existing, and to make our lives [a] living hell. If these get accepted, the already high rates of suicide in [the trans] community are only going to skyrocket. People need safety, so why is it being denied by something out of our control?

Q: What do you want for the future of trans people?

TS: I want trans people to be able to be themselves without fear of being abused, outcasted, and downright hated. I want trans people to be able to exist in a world that does not openly try to put them down every step of the way. It's a very simple want but if these laws get passed, it won't be simple anymore.

These are such sad responses. This really puts into perspective the anxiety and severe pressures trans people go through within themselves, and the external factors often make the situations worse. I had a similar experience that shoved me back in the closet. I came out when I was 12 to a few friends, and all of them said it wasn't possible because "I was following the trend" of a different trans friend. That, alone, shoved me back because I trusted and believed them.

Personally, I have faced an immense amount of transphobia from every angle: familial, peer, strangers, and even teachers. Currently by law, a teacher has to call a trans student by the name they want to be called by.

When I came out (June 2021), I went back to school with a new name. I had a teacher that didn't like that, because they knew me the year prior. Instead of using my first name, they always called me by my last name. They used she/her pronouns for me at all times. Now that I am out of their class, they won't speak to me in the hallways, despite my friendly efforts. This seems to be a very common thing amongst teachers I had in my underclassman years. My eighth grade year, there was this cis male (a student whose gender identity aligns with their birth sex) who wanted to be called "Sauce." The teacher questioned it at first, but never called him his real name. Just "Sauce." The whole year. That nickname was more accepted by teachers than my real, chosen name is. It's unfair, to say the least. Kim Reynolds won't let me change my name legally either, due to the fact that my deadname (the name that was given to me at birth that I no longer use) is classified as "a boy and a girl name," but I know grown men who want to change their name to a different one, as a preference, and the government doesn't think twice about it. They get the "okay" and they're out the door, with their new legal name.

Banning trans people from sports and other things is also dangerous. That law doesn't just affect trans people, cis people are affected just as equally. Officials will have to check your genitalia, which can lead to many sexual assault cases. They will check your birth certificate and your license, but what about the trans people who have changed their sex on their birth certificate and ID? Yes, you can do it if you have the proper surgeries and live in the correct area. Forcing people to go to their sex-assigned bathroom is also dangerous. What about the trans women who pass as women that get sexually or physically assaulted by men in the men's restroom, or the trans men that get slapped and screamed at in the women's?

The cherry on top of all of this is realizing that denying all gender-affirming care goes further than trans people. It also includes hair transplants (for people to get body hair transferred to their head or face), breast augmentations, breast reductions, hormone therapy (for cis people who lack their natural-produced hormone), hysterectomies (for people who need their uterus removed), and so many other things. They wouldn't be able to get these things because trans people also get them, and you can't deny a procedure for a specific group of people, you need to get rid of it entirely. Think about all of the deaths that may occur because people want to get rid of transgender people.

I implore you to step back and think about how the world will be affected if we eradicate something that has been so normalized over the past 10 years. Trans people are no different than you.