

Testimony in Support of HB 2791

Brittany Jones

House Health & Social Services Committee

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Chairwoman Landwehr and members of the committee, my name is Brittany Jones. I am an attorney and the Director of Policy and Engagement for Kansas Family Voice. We represent thousands of members in Kansas who are concerned about the threat of these experimental procedures and drugs to children in Kansas. We support H.B. 2791 because it ensures that Kansas children will be given time to pursue therapies that will not permanently alter their bodies.

H.B. 2791 helps kids by holding those accountable who would put their wellbeing at risk for the sake of their own ideology. Kids deserve help and not harm as they grow towards adulthood. Increasingly, children who are struggling to embrace their God-given biological sex, have been directed towards medical treatment that includes irreversible surgeries and off-label use of puberty blockers, or the administration of cross-sex hormones above naturally occurring levels.

Cross sex hormones can cause irreversible infertility, type 2 diabetes, coronary artery disease and host of other problems depending on the patient's sex.¹ These treatments are experimental at best.² Knowing that these are experimental, professionals have a duty to give informed consent to patients.

In fact, as these problems mount, in Britain a well-known gender clinic for minors closed because of unsafe practices, concerns about a lack of consent from children, and practitioners who consistently overlooked other health challenges children were facing.³

Similarly, Sweden is reversing course and updating their guidelines for minors as they have learned more information about children detransitioning and about unsafe practices that have been used in their country. In Sweden, the updated guidance states that the risks associated with gender affirmation "currently outweigh the possible benefits, and that the treatments should be offered only in exceptional cases."⁴ In both these countries, practitioners are realizing that these children need meaningful talk therapy instead of life altering medical treatment.

And we do not have to cross an ocean to find practitioners, and even former advocates, who are speaking out against these procedures. Jamie Reed used to work for the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis' gender clinic.⁵ She published an article expressing grave concern over the clinic's pattern of fast tracking procedures for

¹ Eyler AE, Pang SC, Clark A. LGBT assisted reproduction: current practice and future possibilities. *LGBT Health* 2014;1(3):151-156; Schmidt L, Levine R. Psychological outcomes and reproductive issues among gender dysphoric individuals. *Endocrinol Metab Clin N Am* 2015; 44:773-785.

² <https://acpeds.org/position-statements/gender-dysphoria-in-children>

³ Jasmine Andersson & Andre Rhoden-Paul, NHS to close Tavistock child gender identity clinic, July 28, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-62335665>.

⁴ Society for Evidence Based Gender Medicine, Summary of Key Recommendations from the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare, Feb. 2022, <https://segm.org/segm-summary-sweden-prioritizes-therapy-curbs-hormones-for-gender-dysphoric-youth>.

⁵ Jamie Reed, I Thought I Was Saving Trans Kids. Now I'm Blowing the Whistle, Feb. 9, 2023, <https://www.thefp.com/p/i-thought-i-was-saving-trans-kids?fbclid=IwAR3lap1dz96pe5EPnJkz1XovntCWLOslbJoSVmWDO1-fwXKSldhJl2UObmU>.

children without any real safeguard and the sharp increase in patients she encountered who did not show any previous gender distress. She wrote about the number of patients that were facing horrific side effects after their treatments. The Missouri Attorney General is now investigating this clinic based on her concerns.⁶ And it's not just the St. Louis clinic that has been providing these experimental treatments. Children's Mercy Hospital, Planned Parenthood of the Great Plains, & KU Medical have all advertised these services.⁷ And several other providers testified that they provided these services last year.

Our law has historically protected children from making binding, life altering decisions. This is a time to once again step up and protect our children until they at least reach 18. We know that children are often incapable of fully grasping the weight of their decisions because of brain development and simple lack of life experience, which is the reason for these historic laws.

As families sort through the best response for their children who may be struggling to come to grips with their body, we need to encourage them to seek care to uncover the real source of their struggles – not life altering surgeries or prescriptions. Children should not be coerced into treatment that impacts their long term health. Because of these concerns at least 20 states have already passed similar legislation.⁸ Kansas should follow their lead and protect Kansas children.

Medical practitioners should not be so committed to an ideology that they look past real physical harm, as evidenced right over the border in Missouri. As a society, we should be able to stand together to protect Kansas kids from these sort of experimentations. That's why I ask that you pass H.B. 2791 out of committee favorably.

Thank you!

⁶ Press Release: Missouri Attorney General Andrew Bailey Confirms Launch of Multi-Agency Investigation into St. Louis Transgender Center for Harming Hundreds of Children, Feb. 9, 2023, <https://ago.mo.gov/home/news/2023/02/09/missouri-attorney-general-andrew-bailey-confirms-launch-of-multi-agency-investigation-into-st-louis-transgender-center-for-harming-hundreds-of-children>.

⁷ Gender Pathway Services, <https://www.childrensmc.org/departments-and-clinics/endocrinology/gender-pathway-services/>, Gender Affirming Care, <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/planned-parenthood-great-plains/patient-resources/gender-affirming-care>

⁸Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, and Utah.