

Good morning, committee members, and thank you for your time today. My name is Adam Kellogg, I am 19 years old, and I am a student at the University of Kansas studying psychology. In fact, I hope one day to be a therapist with KU Med. I have an amazing group of friends, a loving mother, and great coworkers at my on-campus job. In my spare time, I am learning to sew and I keep up with KU basketball and the Chiefs (I hope by the time you read this, we've won the Super Bowl!). My best friend, Kate, calls me almost every day from back home in Olathe, and I go to visit my friends in Manhattan when I can find the time.

None of that is why I am here today, although I could definitely wax on about how wonderful my life is. Instead, I am called here to discuss another very important aspect of my life. I am a transgender man — female to male — and my necessary healthcare is up for debate, despite all the research and endorsement from respected medical institutions that says it is critical, life-saving care for transgender youth.

My transition has had its ups and downs, but over the last seven years of living as a proud transgender man, the beauty and joy of being who I am has not wavered. I came out when I was 12 years old after testing the waters of my identity for months with close friends. I chose different names that did not fit quite right, but when I heard the name Adam, I felt as if a puzzle piece fell into place. Still, there were many pieces that needed to fall after that one.

Supportive and active friends and family members made a world of difference for me, but the tide really started to turn when I went on hormone blockers at the age of 13. I remained on hormone blockers for almost four years with no further medical steps taken towards becoming my true self. This step in my transition was carefully weighed by medical professionals, but even through all the hurdles, I was ecstatic to participate in my own healthcare along with these professionals and my family. Such a process is routine for transgender kids with supportive parents.

In high school, my name was legally changed, which removed a lot of hassle for me, but I was still missing the effects of male puberty. What I really wanted was to experience the voice cracks, the sudden fridge raids at two a.m., the acne, the hair in the strangest places, and the emotional twists and turns of adolescence. My mom, my doctors, and I agreed that I would have the smoothest transition if I went on hormones before I left for college. So, three days before my 17th birthday, I got my first shot of testosterone from the lovely staff at KU Med.

I used to roll my eyes when the transgender people I knew said that hormones changed their lives, but I was blown away with how quickly the joy rushes in. With my first few injections of testosterone, the changes in my affect and my confidence were drastic. I stood straighter, I spoke louder, and got more outgoing (as outgoing as I could be while I finished high school online). Removing my breasts just after I turned 18 was even better — I bet my spine straightened 30 degrees from how beautiful and confident I felt. A flat chest meant that I didn't have to hunch my shoulders and shove my hands in my pockets.

My doctors, my mom, and — perhaps most importantly, I — were right: college was much easier to handle after I had the medical interventions that I needed to be my true self. For once in my life, I had enough confidence and happiness to make friends in almost every class I took, and I started to wear outfits other than hoodies and skinny jeans.

I am sure you have or will hear from medical professionals and mental health practitioners that make compelling statistical and legal arguments, and I am grateful for each and every person that stands in defense of transgender Kansans. What I want to help the committee understand is that medical transition is not just about saving lives, but about emboldening and freeing them. I cannot imagine life without such medical interventions, and I do not want this committee to imagine it, either. Young people like me deserve access to treatments that they, their doctors, therapists, and families deem appropriate for their lives and their journeys. I urge you to strike down SB12 and continue to allow transgender youth to experience the beauty of starting their lives in the bodies they love, just like I have been so blessed to. Thank you.