

## Roberta DiMezza

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**From:** Valerie Hill <vhillparalegal@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 12, 2021 11:22 AM  
**To:** House Judiciary Committee  
**Subject:** Intersex Person Supporting HB 6171

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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I am an intersex person. I secretly visited an endocrinologist for 10 years due to the "condition" I was born with. I did not discover my variation until I was 15 as part of a routine sports physical when the nurse asked me date of last menstruation to which I replied "never" I was prescribed a steady dose of hormones and recommended a gonadectomy which I eventually got at the age of 22 before I aged out of my parents' insurance coverage (pre Obama care where the age was raised to 25). I believe the healthcare I received was vastly inadequate and manifestly ill-informed about intersex variations and competent treatment. There was no process of discussion or education, no support system or access to community. This accumulation of medical abuse and erasure took a toll on my mental health which has come to a head during the pandemic.

What gives me hope is that there are people who are fighting to protect the rights of intersex children so that another generation does not need to grow up the way I did. Delaying these surgeries and better informing children *and parents* is the right thing to do and I am so grateful Rhode Island is taking a step to protect intersex people's bodily autonomy.

I'm sure by now you're aware that most of the surgeries are not actually medically necessary. In fact, depending on where an individual is on the "spectrum" of sex, these surgeries could even be called gender *affirming care* for transgender patients. These are surgeries or hormones that transgender people are requesting, with full informed consent. We (intersex people) know that these treatments exist and are easily performed because they were forced upon us by medical practitioners to "normalize" our bodies. I'm sure you're also aware that numerous human rights organizations have declared these surgeries a human rights violation (United Nations, Human Rights Watch).

I support your decision to take action on this critical issue.

Thank you,

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