

Submission from Richard Trevor Herron on Mál 45, þingskjal 45. Frumvarp til breytinga á almennum hegningalögum nr. 19/1940 með síðari breytingum (bælingarmedferð)

Testimony for Iceland

Richard Trevor Herron 25/10/2022

Testimony

My name is Ritchie, I'm 35 years old and live in the United Kingdom, I represent a large group of male detransitioners whose voices have until now, been left unheard in the matter of Gender affirmation.

In 2014, despite having serious mental health issues, under the care of the United Kingdoms Gender Identity

Clinics, I transitioned into a female identity at the age of 26. I adopted a woman's name, took an anti-androgen known as Zoladex Goserelin. I would later take Estradial, a feminising cross sex hormone.

In 2018 I underwent major surgery called a penile inversion with scrotal graft. I had not initially intended to have surgery, I was unsure and weary. I quizzed medical professionals, they reassured me that complications were extremely rare but what I would be getting would more or less mimic a natal female's vagina.

I refused the surgery multiple times, putting it on hold until eventually being driven in 2017 to agree to be referred.

During this time, multiple alarms were raised due to the state of my mental health and wellbeing. I had severe mental health issues and was abusing substances.

Despite this, I was permitted to have surgery and during which I experienced severe blood loss (1600ml), resulting in a blood transfusion days after surgery. My suture popped open days after surgery, which has left a gaping scar near the site. Inside, the passage way is narrow and numb, with only the prostate allowing partial pleasure. Climax is possible with great difficulty, however with a partner it is almost impossible due to the angle, structure and narrowness. Additionally, I left the hospital with a catheter and have been experiencing severe urethral constriction, which now requires constant medical attention.

Not long after surgery, I experienced intense regret. I blamed myself at first, then began bringing it up with the Gender Clinic, where instead of my regret being listened too, I was coached to believe this was a response to anaesthetic and related to my mental health rather than actual regret.

My trans identity was not up for question, it was a predesignated certainty and the idea of regret was constantly challenged and blamed on an obsessive compulsive rumination. I was then referred for treatment for Obsessive

Compulsive Disorder, as they believed I was not experiencing regret but was instead suffering from a new manifestation of OCD.

Now years later, I continue to deal with incontinence and pain. My sexual function is but a fraction of what it was before transition. Even if I had not experienced those complications, the hormones have left me without a sex drive, low energy and short term memory loss.

As an adult, I am left ruined and shattered, with only myself to pick up the pieces. In doing so I have met with many 100's of others online who share the same reality, and the most concerning theme is; the younger a person starts hormones and has surgery; the worse the impact on wellbeing and health. I do not presume this is everyone's experience, but it is an experience that deserves to be heard. There are a sea of silent voices who are too ashamed to speak out, out of fear of losing their community, friends and being further socially alienated.

Many of us, myself included come from single parent households, experience varying degrees of autism and ADHD, OCD and experience major depressive, anxiety and cluster b personality disorders such as unstable personality and bipolar disorder. These issues were used as evidence of our trans status, but in reality, these are evidence of poor mental health. They are never resolved, but instead intensify with hormones and surgeries.

If you want people like me to continue to slip through the net, this new legislation will not only allow it, but endorse it. A therapist should be able to ask questions that are of the benefit of the individual, not being asked questions because they believed affirmation only, cost me my health and my sanity.

I hope the correct decisions are made.

Yours faithfully,

R.T Herron