

I'm a Trans Teen. Here's Why We Deserve Access to Puberty Blockers

Every kid has a biggest fear. Some are scared of the dark. Others can't stand public speaking, or maybe spiders. I'm afraid of growing up into a body that society perceives as male.

So, soon after my 17th birthday, I approached my mom and gave her a big hug. "I think I should have been born a girl?" I choked out, almost sounding confused myself. "Ok... but do you really know?" she asked. "Because it sounds like you're not too sure."

Transgender kids tend to know they're different. At eight, when I first moved to Dallas, I knew I was gay. At 14, I knew that I wasn't a man, but I didn't know for sure if I wanted to transition. It took me three years to ask for testosterone blockers. Regardless of one's place in discovering their gender identity, kids like myself should have access to critical medical services like puberty blockers, affording them time to think.

But across the country, legislators are launching [attacks in their state senates](#), targeting transgender kids and their healthcare. These laws are fundamentally opposed to the American ideals of peace, justice, and freedom.

When I first came out as transgender, my endocrinologist informed me that no clinics could serve minors in all of Dallas-Fort Worth. Planned Parenthood could only treat legal adults. I had to meet via telehealth with a clinic in Austin for four months before I could access prescribed blockers. This issue is urgent, yet it isn't being treated with the care it deserves.

When I initially sought out blockers, Gov. Gregg Abbott and his allies [were shutting down the only adolescent clinic in D-FW](#): The GENECIS Clinic at U.T. Southwestern. Dr. Ximena Lopez of GENECIS sued in response, and a judge granted the clinic an injunction to temporarily [continue operations until April 2023](#). Because of Dr. Lopez, I now receive treatment at GENECIS.

Most cisgender people – including lawmakers – don't know much about blockers. This is understandable. But blockers are now my reality, and more people need to know about how they work so that less legislators can [fearmonger their safety](#).

What many legislators fail to realize is blockers are just a pause button.

The World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) labels blockers as "Fully Reversible Interventions." Their standards for care also deem blockers as safe and medically sound. One can take blockers for "a few years," [according to The Mayo Clinic](#). But even if a trans teen stops taking blockers, there are no downsides, according to WPATH. When one discontinues their use, [puberty will shortly resume](#).

My blocker, spironolactone, is an anti-androgen, meaning [it lowers or pauses the production of sex hormones](#) (in my case, testosterone.) At breakfast I take 50 mg of spironolactone with Claritin. (I get the sniffles.) The blockers' changes on my body are minor; I'm even getting

taller. But their impacts on my psyche are major. Knowing that I'm slowing male puberty with a daily pill relieves some of my anxiety, and I know it does the same for thousands of teens like me.

Across global cultures and histories, gender has often been understood as a social construct. In Nigeria, for instance, the native language of Igbo has no gendered pronouns. It is possible to accept and affirm individuals' varied gender expressions, upholding the universal values of freedom and individuality.

Puberty blockers support these peaceful ideals in many ways. Primarily, they give trans teens a space to breathe. Studies show 82 percent of trans teens have contemplated suicide, [according to the NIH](#). But on blockers, those figures are [greatly reduced](#).

To add, puberty blockers are not just used in transgender kids. In fact, [most people who take spironolactone are not trans](#). Many young cisgender boys who struggle with a high sex drive take them to [lower testosterone levels](#). An estimated [three million Americans](#), particularly women, utilize spironolactone for anything from [hypertension to low blood pressure to hormonal acne to menopause](#). And my mother was pleasantly surprised to learn we're both on the same drug too.

Even while researching for this piece, Google showed me an ad that read: "Need Spironolactone for Acne? Try It Here Free."

Legislators tell me my use of puberty blockers is "[child abuse](#)" and that I'm too young to know what I want. I hope and want to believe these lawmakers are coming from a place of ignorance. My mother, for instance, was unfamiliar with blockers too. But she now knows that these lawmakers are closing my window to decide what I should do with my body; they're perpetuating my biggest fear.

Further, anti-transgender lawmakers deny me freedom of expression. Some might say this is untrue because they have not yet passed laws explicitly targeting actions like my ability to put on make-up or wear feminine clothing. What these critics fail to realize is lawmakers have done just that, implicitly. For instance, when I was not on blockers, I felt worried wearing a skirt (given that people perceived me as male). This put my safety at risk. So, I made a choice: I put my expression on the backburner so that I could avoid targeting. Lawmakers who refuse to allow transgender youth gender-affirming care deny teens like me the freedom to *truly* express ourselves.

To give them credit, I can understand why these lawmakers might believe I'm too young to know what I want. Still, if this is true, why are they depriving me from having more time through puberty blockers?

Additionally, many lawmakers champion notions of liberty and freedom through their party platforms. I support these fundamental rights, too. If we respectfully share this ideology – that people should be able to exist freely – then why are many of them trying to legislate my identity away?

Puberty blockers have allowed me to explore my gender identity and expression safely. They've given me a real chance to figure out who I am and want to be. Now, my childhood fears are no longer present. I'm not so afraid of growing up and getting older. In fact, I relish it, because each day I learn more about myself and what I want from life. This experience exemplifies how blockers can serve as a mechanism for peace, freedom, and tranquility.

I know I'm young. I agree that I need time to grow into myself. So please, I urge you, the reader, to give me that time. Look into the platforms of political parties and determine if they will uphold the liberties of transgender teens. Then, combine your research with action. Vote for lawmakers who allow teens like myself access to blockers. By doing this, you will uphold universal values like peace, liberty, and one's freedom to express themselves truthfully.