

# Affirm Your Kid's Chosen Gender Or Lose Custody? Colorado's Chilling New Bill



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*Authored by Julian Adorney via The Epoch Times (emphasis ours),*

The Colorado state legislature is considering a bill that would radically chill parents' speech. Dubbed the "Kelly Loving Act," [the bill](#), if signed into law, **would empower judges to consider "deadnaming" and "misgendering" your child to be types of "coercive control"** when they're making custody decisions. In simple terms: if your child gender transitions and you don't affirm their new gender identity, then a judge could consider your non-affirmation to be a form of abuse and use it as justification to deny you custody of your child.



AP Photo/Timothy D. Easley, File

This is a deeply chilling bill. The bill's sponsors [frame it](#) as a way to show support for transgender people, but this bill goes way too far in stripping away parents' rights.

**Being a good and loving parent means telling your child “no.” Every parent has had these conversations.**

“No, you can’t have M&Ms for dinner; eat your broccoli.”

“No, you can’t stay up until midnight. Your bedtime is ten.”

“No, you can’t hang out with Chad who’s always high; find some friends who will have a better influence on you.”

**But when it comes to gender transitioning, saying “no” could be dangerous.** If your son decides to socially transition and begins calling himself a girl, and you don’t unconditionally affirm that decision, then you could risk losing him if you’re ever in a child custody battle.

**Some advocates of gender transitioning say that socially transitioning is harmless.** After all, what does it matter if your son starts to use female pronouns and wear dresses? The problem is that socially transitioning puts many children on a conveyor belt to medically transitioning. [According to](#) a 2022 study on the topic, **a stunning 97.5 percent of young people who socially transitioned continued to identify as either trans or nonbinary several years later.** Nearly 60 percent went on to medically transition via either puberty blockers or cross-sex hormones.

Proponents of gender-affirming care for young people suggest that these numbers are proof that young people know their gender identity and simply need it to be affirmed; when it is affirmed, they do not waver. But this idea falls apart when we consider that the mean child in the study socially transitioned when they were just six years old. It is possible that some of these children truly are transgender. **Much more likely is that, when a slew of authority figures validate a young child’s sense of identity, these authority figures reify that sense of identity.** This is true even if the identity in question is not something that the child would ever have chosen had they not been [prodded into it](#) by well-meaning authority figures.

The fragile and unsteady formation of a child's sense of identity has long been studied by psychologists. If authority figures tell a child that he or she is [worthless or defective](#), then many children will believe that even if it is not true. If authority figures tell a child that they are stupid, or bad at sports, or shouldn't play piano, and if the authority figures hammer this message home for years from a young age, many children will grow to believe this about themselves.

**Indeed, this helps explain the rapid rise of transgender-identifying youth.** As professor of psychology [Jean Twenge notes](#), the number of young people who identify as transgender has exploded in recent years.

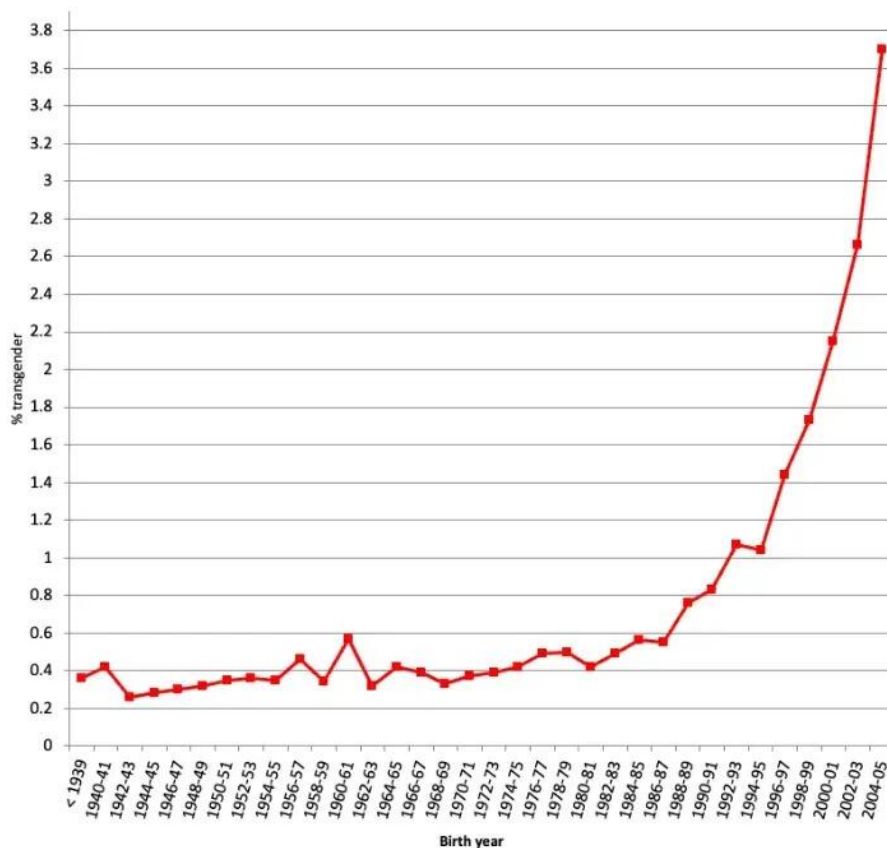


Figure 2: Percent of U.S. adults identifying as transgender, by birth year. Source: Behavioral Risk Surveillance Survey, CDC.

Some of this explosion might have to do with the fact that people who identify as transgender feel safer coming out of the closet than they might have in previous decades. But the size of the surge suggests that a lot of this is socially mediated; that is, young people are being pressured by peers or by authority figures (including by the promise of unconditional acceptance) into adopting an identity that isn't really theirs.

As social psychologist Jonathan Haidt puts it in "[The Anxious Generation](#)":

"the fact that gender dysphoria now often appears in social clusters (such as a group of close friends), the fact that parents and those who transition back to their natal sex identify social media as a major source of information and encouragement, and the fact that gender dysphoria is now being diagnosed among many adolescents who showed no signs of it as children all indicate that social influence and sociogenic transmission may be at work as well."

For many young children who are being encouraged to socially transition, the best and most loving act that a parent can take may indeed be to push back on this false sense of identity rather than reify it. There are times when parents really do know best.

When it comes to free speech, a good rule of thumb is this: the more weighty a matter is, the more essential that we be allowed to discuss it freely. The higher the stakes to vulnerable lives if we make the wrong decision, the more essential it is that everyone should have the freedom to share their perspective.

The reason is simple: **free speech is a powerful vehicle for discovering the truth of a matter, because it allows everyone involved to bring their perspective and their knowledge to bear on the question.** When we don't allow all parties to speak freely, we increase the risk of making bad decisions because the blind spots and cognitive biases of the people who are allowed to speak do not get confronted. As John Milton wrote in "[Areopagitica](#)," "Let her [Truth] and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?"

This bill threatens to chill speech on one of the most important questions that a parent will ever have to wrestle with. If a six-year-old boy wants to socially transition, then it is essential that his parents be free to discuss the matter frankly and honestly. They should bring up their concerns. **Only when both parents are free to discuss these matters openly and honestly can they help the child to navigate this decision in a way that is most likely to be in the child's long-term best interest.**

If the Colorado bill were to become law, it would put a stop to those conversations. If a mother believes that affirming her six-year-old son's decision to socially transition isn't in his best interest, is she going to speak up about her concerns knowing that it [could potentially](#) cost her custody of her child? More likely, she'll be tempted to keep her concerns and opinions to herself, in order to not take the risk. But that state-enforced silence won't help her son.

It's easy to see the noble intentions motivating the authors of the "Kelly Loving Act." As one of the bill's sponsors [said](#), "This is a bill that will ... send a message to trans people in Colorado that we believe in them, care for them, and love them, and we want them to live healthy, safe lives." We should certainly all be respectful of adults who choose to transition their sex or gender, and to love and care for them as God's cherished children.

**It's also essential that we care for young people struggling to find their identity in a tumultuous world.** But we should remember that most parents know their children and love their children far better than a judge ever could. Perhaps the most caring thing we can do for young children right now is to empower parents to raise them as the parents see fit, without unnecessary and intrusive political oversight from state agents.

*From the [American Institute for Economic Research](#) (AIER)*

*Views expressed in this article are opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times or ZeroHedge.*