

Witness Testimony for HB1385 to be presented on 3/03:

If you pass this bill, children are going to die.

My name is Fidel Green, and I use he/him pronouns. I am 22 years old, and I spent 17 of those years - the majority of my life - going to public school in Maryland. And I know that this bill is dangerous.

I know this because when I was 12, a girl in my choir class came to school crying. She had been kicked out of her house after texting a friend that she might be bisexual. This girl was young, and not even sure that the label fit her yet. But when her mother found the text, it was enough to damn her.

I know this bill is dangerous, because when I was 14, I knew a boy on the soccer team. He was popular and smart and the girls all thought he was cute. And then the rumors spread - one night, at a party, someone thought they saw him kissing another boy. Later that week, when he was walking home from school, a bunch of boys from the team cornered him, jumped him and beat him bloody. He was hospitalized, and when his father asked him what had happened, he was too scared to tell him the truth.

I know this bill is dangerous because I was 16, I met a boy who would later become one of my best friends. He was the first openly trans person at my school - the first one I had ever met. And he lived every day in fear. He didn't eat or drink at lunch, because he was not welcome in either of the gendered bathrooms. But home was worse, so he stayed after every day for clubs, theatre, and activities. He did this because he wanted to avoid his father, who had once drawn a gun and pointed it in his face just because he asked to wear a suit to our homecoming dance.

LGBTQ teens are more likely to get bullied, more likely to be kicked out of their homes, more likely to be killed and more likely to commit suicide than any other group. Understand, this does not just apply to the children that are actually queer - this can happen to anyone who is even accused of it. And instead of trying to protect these children, this assembly has introduced a bill that would require teachers to "out" them, at a time in their lives when they may not even be sure of their identity yet.

I can't put this any more clearly: outing is death. If you pass this bill, children are going to die.

Thank you for your time.