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Sent: Thu, 10 Jun 2021 11:26:20 -0400
To: T9PublicHearing
Subject: please be careful with "gender identity"

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I am writing as the mother of a child who identifies as non-binary. She adopted this label shortly after puberty, which was early and dramatic. Previously she was emphatically girly in every way and resisted my regular efforts to interest her in things that defied girly stereotypes. She is artistic, creative, highly intelligent, and highly sensitive. For her, "non binary" is a way to cling to her childhood, to say that she opts out of her sexualized body.

But the ideology that accompanies the idea of gender identity makes it extremely difficult to effectively parent. She already has the solution to her sense of alienation and social anxiety. She ruminates about gender instead of engaging in the normal work of adolescence. According to Erik Erikson, the tasks of adolescence are to develop occupational identity and sexual identity. Perseverating on gender identity hijacks this. It strengthens her sense of alienation from society, making her fearful. And it contains strong elements of homophobia, which may be confusing her too, because I think she may actually be a lesbian. So she proceeds along, thinking about gender, and dreaming of the day she can get a double mastectomy. She has no idea of the ramifications of this - she has never been in a relationship.

Adults in positions of authority need to be very cautious about overly affirming these identities. They are adopted for myriad reasons, and they have real potential to be harmful if accepted unquestioningly. Beyond this, parental authority is being undermined, because I can't say "look, this makes no sense, my daughter has these other issues" and be believed. We have only to look to the issues in Great Britain and Scandinavia to see that elevating gender identity (an attribute that only exists in some people's minds) to the level of biological sex in terms of protections and rights is a minefield.

Please consider very carefully how to protect kids with gender dysphoria without encoding the language of "gender identity" into law.

Thank you,
Abby Barker