

Dad says 14-year-old daughter insisted she was a boy — and public school 'undermined' his attempts to convince her otherwise

'Many parents just like my wife and me are often afraid to speak out because we are told we are transphobic bigots'

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Jay Keck said there was never any indication his daughter "wanted to be a boy" during her growing-up years.

"She loved stuffed animals, Pocahontas, and wearing colorful bathing suits," Keck continued in a Monday [op-ed for USA Today](#). "I can't recall a single interest that seemed unusually masculine, or any evidence that she was uncomfortable as a girl."

But in 2016 when his daughter was 14 years old, she declared she was a boy, Keck said.

Thing is, though, his daughter didn't tell him or his wife right off the bat; instead she "first came out as transgender to her school" in suburban Chicago, he wrote in his op-ed.

Turns out his daughter — who also was on the autism spectrum — was approached at school by a girl who'd just come out at school as transgender, Keck said, adding that his daughter soon after believed the same thing about herself.

"The faculty and staff — who had full knowledge of her mental health challenges — affirmed her," he wrote. "Without telling me or my wife, they referred to her by her new name. They treated my daughter as if she were a boy, using male pronouns and giving her access to a gender neutral restroom."

It gets worse

After Keck and his wife found out their daughter believed she was a boy, Keck wrote that he told special-ed officials that school personnel should call his daughter by her legal name at all times.

But he said that request was ignored. In fact, Keck added that "in my attempt to help her, her public school undermined me every step of the way."

More from his USA Today op-ed:

We met with the school district's assistant superintendent, who told us the hands of school personnel are tied and that they had to follow the law. But there was no law, only the Obama administration's "[Dear Colleagues](#)" letter of May 2016 that said schools need to officially affirm transgender students. Just three months later, in August 2016, a federal judge in Texas [blocked the guidelines](#) from being enforced. And in February 2017, the Trump administration [rescinded the Obama-era guidelines](#), leaving it to the states to set their own policies.

I also learned that the ACLU has sent threatening [letters to schools](#) stating that it is against the law to disclose a student's gender identity, even to their parents. But this letter appears to misunderstand federal law. The federal [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#) requires that schools allow parents to "inspect and review" their child's education records as long as the child is under 18.

My daughter told me that the school social worker was advising her about halfway houses because he thought we did not support her. The social worker confirmed this when I scheduled a meeting with him to discuss it. This felt like a horrifying attempt

to encourage our daughter to run away from home.

We had our daughter evaluated by a psychologist approved by the school district. He told us that it was very clear that our daughter's sudden transgender identity was driven by her underlying mental health conditions, but would only share his thoughts off the record because he feared the potential backlash he would receive. In the report he submitted to us and the school, he did not include these concerns that he would only share in person.

Parents 'afraid to speak out'

Keck also said he's learned that "parents just like my wife and me are often afraid to

speaking out because we are told we are transphobic bigots, simply because we do not believe our children were born into the wrong bodies."

He added in the op-ed that when his daughter "returned to high school to finish her senior year, I contacted the principal to let him know I expected her legal name to be used at graduation. Once again, the school refused to honor my request."

"Thanks in large part to my daughter's school," Keck wrote, "my daughter is more convinced than ever that she is a boy, and that testosterone may be necessary for her to become her authentic self."

You can [read Keck's entire op-ed here](#).