Republicans launch ‘unconstitutional’ bid to ban trans kids from accessing life-saving puberty blockers

NICK DUFFY JANUARY 12, 2021

Mississippi Republican lawmakers are seeking to ban all transition-related healthcare for transgender people until the age of 21, under one of the most extreme anti-trans bills yet.

The Orwellian legislation tabled by state lawmakers on Monday (11 January) aims to restrict access to trans-related care in the Deep South state.

The so-called “Transgender 21 Act”, filed by Republican senator Angela Burks Hill, would ban the use of puberty-blocking drugs, hormones and surgery for transgender people until they are 21.

Hill claims the purpose of the act is to “protect” minors, arguing that they are “unable to fully appreciate the risks and life implications that result from the use of puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and surgical procedures”.

Mississippi currently permits marriage from age 15 with parental consent, enlistment in the military from 17, and both cosmetic surgery and gun ownership from 18 – several years before trans people are apparently competent enough to make decisions about their own body.

The bill only targets treatments intended to “facilitate the minor’s desire to present or appear in a manner that is inconsistent with the minor’s sex”, meaning that the exact same puberty-blocking drugs and hormones could still be issued to cisgender people for unrelated health conditions.

Mississippi Republican lawmakers are seeking to ban all transition-related healthcare (CC BY-SA 4.0/Michael Barera)

Mississippi Republicans’ ‘Transgender 21 Act’ would be ‘devastating’.

Of course, prescribing puberty-blocking drugs at the age of 21 would be fairly redundant, meaning the bill would also function as a de facto ban on the treatment.

The mean-spirited law would also continue to allow cisgender people to get breast enhancements or reductions as teenagers, while banning transgender people from doing so.

ACLU lawyer Chase Strangio said the bill would be “devastating” for trans people, branding it “ alarming and unconstitutional on many fronts”.

The move comes amid a flurry of anti-trans legislation filed across the US as state legislatures return, with a tidal wave of copycat bills filed in Oklahoma, Montana, Tennessee, Texas, Alabama, Utah, New Hampshire and Maine seeking to restrict healthcare or roll back rights for trans people.

Strangio tweeted: “Every time I looked away from my computer today, another anti-trans bill was filed. It is non-stop.”

Hill is a regular proponent of anti-LGBT+ legislation in the state, previously sponsoring bills to exclude trans people from sports. She also championed an anti-gay religious freedom law passed by the state in 2016, seeking to permit businesses and officials to lawfully discriminate against same-sex couples.