

Western Illinois University
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Abstract

Recorded Scholarly Presentation

Major: Liberal Arts and Sciences

Faculty Mentor: Tammy Werner

Policy Brief: Laws Needed to Protect the Rights of Intersex Minors

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This presentation discusses a work in progress that I am completing for the Senior Capstone course in the Liberal Arts and Sciences. This project involves creating a policy brief that advocates for a social justice issue. For my project, I am addressing the human right violation of forcing intersex babies and children into having medically unnecessary surgeries that they cannot consent to or understand. About 1 in every 100 babies are born intersex and about 2 in every 1000 are made to undergo unnecessary surgery. These surgeries are being performed as a result of discrimination against those born with “ambiguous” reproductive systems based on an outdated understanding of biological sex and the socially constructed origins of gender roles. Everyone deserves the right to learn about and understand their own identity and present it to the world as they choose. These surgeries are traumatizing acts violence that often cause irreparable damage to the individual’s mental and physical health while robbing them of their bodily autonomy. We must protect them by making it illegal for the parents and doctors of intersex individuals to make decisions about their bodies before they are old enough to develop their own sense of self. Such life altering surgeries should only performed if the intersex individual chooses that path as a consenting adult.