

The Deadly Cost of Hate: Why My Daughter Jillian's Story Must Be Heard

By Cindy Coffey, Nottingham

On December 20th, it will be the 2nd anniversary of the day my world stopped—the day my beautiful daughter, **Jillian**, died by suicide. She was a courageous, brilliant, and loving transgender young woman, and I was, and always will be, her **fiercely proud mother**.

To those who would dismiss the fight for LGBTQ+ rights as a 'culture war,' I offer my own life as proof of the opposite. **This is a matter of life and death**. I am speaking out because I cannot let Jillian's memory be silent while the systemic cruelty that contributed to her despair is being codified into law in our state.

Hatred in Our Own Backyard

A few months ago, I was sitting at a Nottingham Democrats meeting, listening to State Representative Alice Wade. Rep. Wade, herself an openly transgender woman, spoke with grace and conviction, stressing how essential it is for our community to continue telling its stories in the face of relentless legislative attacks.

Then, the true nature of the fight was laid bare. During the Q&A, a woman stood up and unleashed a torrent of vile hatred.

As she stormed out of the room, she yelled a phrase that echoed the constant, toxic message Jillian heard every single day: **All transgender people should die**. Despite the vicious interruption, Rep. Wade continued the Q&A with dignity, and it was then that I found the courage to speak up. Although visibly shaken, I shared my story for the very first time—the story of my beautiful daughter and the pain of her loss.

Rep. Wade came to sit with me during the break. She told me that when I was ready, it would be helpful to tell Jillian's story.

The Connection Between Ridicule and Law

The hatred I witnessed in that room is not an isolated incident. It is the core of the **culture of ridicule and disrespect** that our political leaders are actively validating.

When bills are passed—like the recent bans on gender-affirming care (HB 377 and HB 712) or attempts to legislate who can use a public bathroom—they don't just change a legal code. **They legitimize the scream of hate I heard at our meeting.** They send a clear, deadly message to every trans person, including my daughter, that their identity is invalid, their existence is up for debate, and their life is worth less.

Jillian's death was not just a battle she lost with herself. It was the result of a soul exhausted by a world that refused her safety, affirmed her attackers, and ultimately robbed her of her hope.

My Plea for Action

I urge every member of this committee, every citizen of Nottingham, and every New Hampshire lawmaker to reflect on the **real, human cost of this hatred.**

- We must actively oppose every piece of legislation that targets the LGBTQ+ community.
- We must combat the culture of ridicule wherever we find it.
- We must ensure that young people like my daughter Jillian are not just tolerated, but **fully and unconditionally cherished.**