

Chairperson Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona, Ranking Member Denson, and members of the House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Amy Schneider, and my pronouns are she/her. I am proud to be a native of Ohio, born and raised in the Five Oaks neighborhood of Dayton, and a graduate of Corpus Christi Elementary, Chaminade-Julienne High School, and the University of Dayton (go Flyers!). This year, I also became a Jeopardy champion. But most importantly for this hearing, I am a trans woman, and I am here today because I am strongly opposed to House Bill 454, banning gender affirming healthcare for minors

I believe that this bill would have devastating consequences for Ohio's children, but let me be clear: I am not here to demonize supporters of this bill, or claim that they want children to suffer. I truly believe that all of us here share the same goal: to keep Ohio's children safe and healthy. But if you do share that goal, then passing this bill would be a tragic mistake. Because far from protecting children, this bill would put some of them in grave danger, a danger that not all of them would survive

I know that sounds extreme, like I must be exaggerating. And I understand that reaction, but I truly believe that I am telling the simple truth. I could point you to statistics and studies that back me up, but I'm not a statistician or a doctor. Instead I want to share with you why, even if I'd never seen any studies, I would still believe that children's lives depend on the fate of this bill.

You see, my life is going great right now. Like, beyond my wildest dreams type great. I won over a million dollars on Jeopardy, and become a minor celebrity because of it. I have quit my job, traveled the country, been invited to the White House. And most of all, this year I married the love of my life. And yet, if all of that remained the same, but I was told I could no longer receive hormone therapy? I don't know if I could go on living. I hope that I would, that I'd find the strength to carry on. But I truly don't know if I would survive

The best metaphor I've come up with is that it's as if, from the moment I was born, an alarm bell was going off in the back of my mind. And after decades of living with that agony, I came out as trans, and began receiving treatment. And suddenly that alarm went silent, and I felt peace and quiet for the first time in my life. The only reason I managed to live with it before was because I didn't know there was another way to live. But to have that alarm turned back on, now that I know a life without it, would be unbearable

And that's me, a grown woman that has everything else going for her. But there are kids in this state who don't have what I have, who if nothing else have all the normal problems and anxieties of growing up. But because of the medical care they're receiving, they at least don't have to live with that alarm bell any more. So I'm asking you: please, don't take that away from them. I'm not asking anyone here to change your personal views on trans people, I'm not scolding anyone about pronouns. I'm not asking you to do anything except NOT pass a bill that expands the government's reach, to NOT restrict the freedom of families and doctors and

communities to decide for themselves what their children need, without a bunch of politicians in Columbus getting involved in everyone's private business

So I hope that you will consider my testimony and vote NO on this dangerous bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I will now take any questions you may have.