

Testimony
HB 454
November 16, 2022

Hello, my name is Charlotte and I have lived in Ohio for 11 years. Very early in life I felt uncomfortable in my body. I felt the roles that were assigned to me as a boy did not fit what I thought of myself. I didn't want to wear the clothes my mom had for me or play with other boys because I felt like it was a lot of work to be something they thought was normal. This continued through my early school years.

When I went to 3rd grade I'd had enough of the stereotypes and trying to keep up with them. I was worried every day that someone would find out about me. I began to talk to my mom and dad about what I felt. I talked to them about the clothes and my hair. They listened, but kind of said they didn't know what to say. Right before my 9th birthday someone on the bus gave me a word for what I felt. Transgender. I came home and told them the word. And I felt better about everything, all at once. I was lucky because my entire family accepted me. My mom took me shopping for new clothing. I was happy. I got my ears pierced and worn dangly earrings.

Not everyone accepted me though. My teachers didn't want to put me in line with the girls. Some kids in my class didn't want to come near me. I had to use the boys bathroom and the 5th graders were mean and wouldn't leave me alone. But I wore my dresses and earrings and I felt good.

As a Transgender female I know that my story is some of the best you can hope for. But I know that the SAFE act will affect people like me in a negative way. Not everyone has support and not everyone needs to make the same decisions that I and my family have. Just like no two 'normal' people are the same, no two Trans people should be expected to only follow one course of action. The SAFE act takes the ability to make that decision away completely. And may force people to make unhealthy decisions because of the limits of this act.

To date, I have not received any puberty blockers or hormones, but I have had meetings with specialists from various medical fields and they have all assured me that if I did not want to start any treatments then I did not have to. They did not question that I am Transgender because I didn't want to follow a particular course of action. Instead they re-affirm that the decisions I make are good, and that I am thinking about the real world outcomes of my decisions. And, regarding 'sex reassignment surgery', that is not something they even talk about except to say that is not something they will do at a children's facility and I'd have to be over 18 before I could talk to a Dr. at a different facility about.

The SAFE act will make it impossible for me and other Transgender people to speak truthfully with any adult anymore about our own identity. Doctors, counselors, teachers, and other adults who are 'safe' to talk to would then have to violate our privacy and tell our parents. If my family did not support me then what would that mean for me? Is it acceptable to the committee that me or my Transgender peers be treated like an outcast in their home? Or worse? Statistics show that many homeless kids are LGBTQIA+.

While I believe my experience coming out as Transgender was easier than most it continues to be a tough thing to figure out every day. Having the government make a law that controls my body and limits the decisions my family and I have over that body would destroy my trust in the Ohio government. Also, isn't the foundation of our democracy based on choice and freedom? Having government representatives vote against my basic fundamental rights would feel weird

and unlike the American spirit. If this bill is passed, Transgender children all over Ohio will know that they don't have the same rights as their peers. They will lose a CHOICE that should rightfully be theirs. I urge you to vote against the SAFE act.

Thank you for your time