

Thank you to the committee for allowing me to speak today. My name is Dara Adkison and I am a resident of Northeast Ohio. I come before you both as a transgender parent and as the secretary of TransOhio.

TransOhio is Ohio's first and largest transgender equity organization. We are an all-volunteer 501(C)(3) group, TransOhio is dedicated to education, advocacy, support, and community. For over a decade, we have worked with trans people and our allies across Ohio. TransOhio has heard from so many children, parents and families from across the state about their experiences with gender affirming care. All of them tell us that access to gender-affirming care has helped them, has saved their lives, and has been a positive harm reduction they are grateful for. Please do not prevent future children in Ohio from having the same access.

Healthcare choices should be between parents, children and their doctors. State resources are being wasted because a small handful of legislators see having a happy trans kid as worse than if that same kid is miserable through childhood and has a harder adulthood. These same legislators say they care about parents' rights, but what about the rights of parents who affirm their trans children?

Even if you make the lives of trans kids harder, that won't stop the fact that trans people have always been and will always be a part of society, of our communities. We cook your food, teach your children, write your software, use your bathrooms, and root for our sports teams with you. We are everywhere, because we're just people trying to live our best lives like everyone else.

You can choose to be cruel and hurt trans kids, you can make them sad, you can make their childhoods harder, but those trans kids will grow into trans adults whether you like it or not, because it isn't actually up to you, nor should it be.

Our trans joy is resistance against your hate.

Personally, my joy today is that after this hearing I'll go pick my son up from school. I love talking to him about his day. It's just the best. We all have these little joys. And I would do anything for him, just like any good parent.

Good parents want what's best for their children, and they want what their kids need as quickly as possible. Currently getting gender affirming care is already a time intensive process for families in Ohio. During the last testimony day, we heard from numerous medical professionals across the state testify to that fact. So why is it now proposed that this artificial two year waiting period happen?

Just let parents and doctors make the choices for our children.

All Ohio youth deserve access to medical care as laid out by leading national and international health organizations. This proposed legislation isn't just dangerously discriminatory: it's illegal, wrong, and cruel. I urge you and TransOhio urges you, to accept that trans children deserve timely access to healthcare and that ALL parents have the right to make medical choices for their children, and to vote no.