

Opponent Testimony for House Bill 68
House Public Health Policy Committee
Monday, May 22, 2023
Anne Miano

Chairman Lipps, Representative Click, and Members of the House Public Health Policy Committee,

As a Middle School teacher, I am providing this testimony in opposition to House Bill 68. This bill would seriously harm the safety and well-being of LGBTQ+ youth. Gender affirming care saves lives. Denying gender affirming care would have a catastrophic effect on the health of children, some of whom are my students.

We must protect our children and ensure that they have access to best-practice physical and mental health treatment, including LGBTQ+ Youth. HB 68 directly puts already vulnerable LGBTQ+ youth at risk of losing access to vital, best-practice healthcare, including mental health care.

Transgender youth deserve the freedom to live their lives on their own terms under the care and protection of family members and professionals who see them for who they are. Politicians should have no say in how LGBTQ+ individuals identify.

HB 68 would require healthcare professionals to report gender-affirming care to the Ohio Department of Health, which would then compile an annual report to the Ohio General Assembly. I cannot imagine such an invasion of privacy on most other populations or medical conditions. Republican legislators have put a target on the backs of LGBTQ+ youth to stir controversy. Republicans are profiting from these political games at the expense of children.

The American Psychiatric Association made a statement in 2020 regarding gender affirming care. According to a Position Statement on Treatment of Transgender (Trans) and Gender Diverse Youth, the APA:

- 1. Supports access to affirming and supportive treatment for trans and gender diverse youth and their families, including appropriate mental health services, and when indicated puberty suppression and medical transition support.*
- 2. Opposes all legislative and other governmental attempts to limit access to these services for trans and gender diverse youth, or to sanction or criminalize the actions of physicians and other clinicians who provide them.*

The American Association of Pediatrics similarly supports gender-affirming care for youth. The list of medical experts and organizations who oppose bills like HB 68 goes on. When certain legislation is necessary, it should be based on prevailing scientific evidence, not cherry-picked studies or personal beliefs.

HB 68 is a disgrace, and I am mortified when I have to explain some of the legislation coming out of Columbus to my students. Please consider that our differences make us stronger and join doctors, parents, teachers, and children who oppose this harmful bill.

Thank you