

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: May 21, 2023

Name: Martha Filipic

Are you representing: Yourself Organization

Organization (If Applicable):

Position/Title:

Address: 180 Lexington Blvd.

City: Delaware State: OH Zip: 43015

Best Contact Telephone: 740-815-7600 Email: marthafilipic@gmail.com

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): HB 68

Specific Issue: Gender Transition Services for Minors

Are you testifying as a: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Are you testifying: In-Person Written-Only

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? My entire written statement is below.

Please provide a brief statement on your position:

Imagine you are a parent of a child who is struggling with a serious medical issue. You are concerned that their life is at stake, but the course of action recommended by their doctor and the medical profession at large is not possible because the legislature has blocked access to

such care in your state. Imagine the frustration: How could anyone believe they have a right to undermine the well-being of your child?

Yet this is what the Ohio legislature is considering doing with HB 68. Please, listen to the voices of the families with gender diverse children that this bill would affect directly. Do not turn a blind eye to their pleas for empathy and support. Lives are at stake; this is no exaggeration.

I believe HB 68 is problematic in many ways, but one stands out in particular: Sec. 3129.03 (A)(2)(a), which prevents mental health professionals from both diagnosing and treating a minor for a gender-related condition without screening for “other comorbidities that may be influencing the minor individual's gender-related condition, including depression, anxiety ... and other mental health conditions.” This is written in a way that suggests that depression, anxiety and other mental health issues can >cause< gender dysphoria. But please understand: It is the other way around! Untreated gender dysphoria often causes severe anxiety and depression – conditions that cannot be alleviated without treating the gender dysphoria directly. With HB 68, you are putting mental health professionals in a Catch-22, unable to treat the root cause of their clients’ mental health – and related physical health -- issues.

I personally know families who were able to save their children’s lives by obtaining the mental health treatment and hormone therapy that their child’s medical professionals recommended. Please, do not abandon these families, nor any family who is desperate yet determined to find the best way to help their gender-diverse child thrive and live a healthy, fulfilling, productive life.

Sincerely,

Martha Filipic
180 Lexington Blvd.
Delaware, OH 43015

Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.