

Michael Massey
Opponent
House Bill 68
Ohio House Public Health Committee

Thank you, Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Stewart, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the House Public Health Policy Committee. My name is Michael Massey, and I am a third-year medical student in Northeast, Ohio. I am providing testimony in opposition to House Bill 68 on behalf of myself as a lifelong Ohioan and as a future physician.

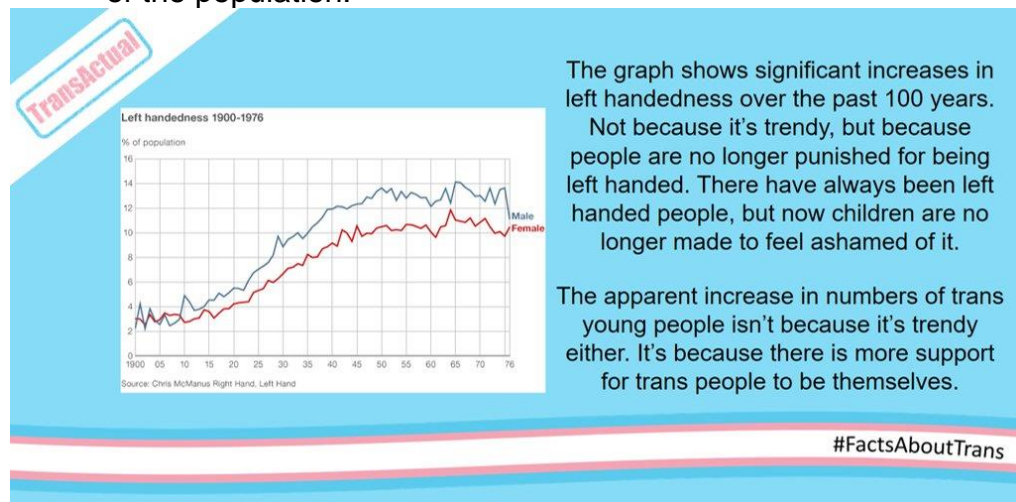
I want to understand where the author, co-sponsors, and supporters of this bill are coming from, because I always assume everyone carries themselves with good intentions. The language and goal of this bill, however, is deeply troubling and will certainly cause the loss of human life and many other terrible effects in this state if passed. I am hoping to hear from members of this committee regarding their thoughts on this bill and have a discussion. I unfortunately could not be there in person since I have my board exam this week.

I want to be as kind and impartial as I can be in my testimony because I feel like many Americans do not know anything about the transgender community, which is understandable, as they only make up an estimated 0.5% to 1.6% of the population. So, the idea of gender affirming care is a cultural shock to a lot of people. I consider myself lucky to have worked in the healthcare field prior to medical school and for my clinical training experience, because I have gotten to know several trans people. Some of them were in their teens, some were in the 30s and 40s, and some were over 60 years old. When you talk to them and ask about their experience, their descriptions are always the same. They knew at a very, very young age that they felt like they were born in the wrong body. Please do not lose sight of the people and humanity that you are targeting with this bill.

To be brief with my testimony, I want to outline a few arguments and pieces of information that I have to address some common fears or misinformed arguments that are made by the proponents of this bill:

- Clarifying the current state of gender-affirming care for minors in the US
 - Gender-affirming care is life-saving, evidence-based medicine that is endorsed by every legitimate medical society, including:
 - American Academy of Pediatrics
 - Pediatric Endocrine Society
 - American Psychological Association
 - American Medical Association
 - Ohio State Medical Association
 - The decision to go through gender-affirming care is a slow, careful, and holistic process. Counseling and therapy are initiated before the decision is made to start hormone-blockers and hormone replacement.

- Surgery is rarely offered to minors, many gender-affirming care providers require trans-identifying patients to wait until they are 18 to go through top or bottom surgery. (Reuters)
 - <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/usa-transyouth-data/>
- Addressing: “Why are more young people identifying as trans?”
 - See graph below that illustrates this point. Being left-hand dominant used to be demonized and vilified in the eyes of the public. Schools and parents used to force their left-handed kid to write with their right hand. Once this belief became outdated, and there was not any vilification or discrimination for being left-hand dominant, the percentage of people who actually used their left hand rose dramatically, AND THEN → plateaued around 10-12% of the population.
 - These same graphs could be found for people identifying as gay, lesbian, or bisexual as well. This same trend is being observed in people identifying as transgender or gender nonconforming- it's expected, and it will likely plateau at a (still) very small percentage of the population.



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- The rate of detransitioning is VERY low, often temporary, and for mixed reasons.
 - The largest study to look at detransitioning was done in 2015, where 27,715 adults who were transitioned or had a history of transitioning were surveyed. Only “8% of respondents had detransitioned temporarily or permanently at some point and that the majority did so only temporarily. Rates of detransition were higher in transgender women (11%) than transgender men (4%). The most common reasons cited were pressure from a parent (36%), transitioning was too hard (33%), too much harassment or discrimination (31%), and trouble getting a job (29%).”
 - <https://academic.oup.com/jcem/article/107/10/e4261/6604653?login=false>
- Why is it important for teenagers to receive hormone-based therapy?
 - It is important for trans teenagers who are going through puberty to receive hormone blocking medication and be accepted for their true gender identity for many reasons, but I want to outline two here.
 - (1) Simply, they are correct in their gender identity. Medical literature and history show that accepting teenagers true gender identity and receiving

treatment lowers the rates of suicide. Receiving their preferred gender-hormones early into the onset of puberty allows them to develop into a body they are comfortable with and allows them to fit in more with their classmates, either in social groups or sports teams.

- (2) Starting gender affirming care early is better for them later in life. A term discussed a lot in the trans community is “passing” or how much trans person looks or presents like their preferred gender identity. While it is important to emphasize that a trans-man’s ability to look like a man or trans-woman’s ability to look like a woman is not the deciding factor on whether they are “completely trans” or “actually trans”, it is certainly a large factor for many transpeople’s body dysmorphia.
 - What I mean by this is transwomen (as an example) who transition later in their life often report being repulsed by their masculine features. Hating their broad shoulders or more prominent jaw line, etc. For the men or women on the committee, please take a minute to think about how you would feel if you had a body shape or features that belonged to the opposite sex.
 - These secondary sex characteristics are developed from puberty hormones. So, if a minor has gone through all the procedures to receive gender affirming care and are certain of who they are at the start of or during puberty, blocking their own body’s puberty hormones and supplying the alternate genders hormones allows them to grow up in a body that resembles who they are in a lot more effective manner than if they had to wait until after they went through puberty for the wrong gender.
- Emphasizing the targeting of this bill, cruelty of anti-transgender activists, and important historical context for transgender discrimination.
 - **Targeting of this bill:** Only 1.15% of Ohioans aged 13-17 (or 8,500 children) identify as transgender. Why are you considering passing a law that would ban their right to healthcare and leave them stranded without the ability to continue or begin the care they need, especially when it only addresses such a small percentage of the population?
 - <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/trans-adults-united-states/>
 - **Cruelty of people who support this type of legislation:** I want to clarify that I am not stating that anyone on the committee or anyone who has testified as a proponent of this bill would support or ally with the people I am about to mention. I simply want to highlight some of the rhetoric that is directed at the trans community, by people who would support this bill.
 - At this point, it is not a secret that there has been a large spike in animosity, hate crimes, and laws against transgender existence. I believe the number is over 390 state bills have been introduced to ban various aspects of transgender and LGBTQ+ life, whether its banning education in school, banning public restroom use, banning sports participation, gender affirming care for minors, and even banning transgender healthcare entirely.
 - Hate crimes against LGBTQ+ people in major cities has increased by 51% in 2021.

- <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/internet/right-wing-influencers-media-double-anti-lgbtq-rhetoric-wake-colorado-rcna58371>
- The rhetoric from prominent political figures about the transgender community is very twisted and cruel. The Club Q shooting in Colorado comes to mind, where the owner of the club blamed all the anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric from some prominent media/social media figures for spurring on the violence. Tucker Carlson's show, Libs of TikTok creator Chaya Raichik, Matt Walsh, and Tim Poole subsequently doubled down on the shooting and blamed the victims and the club for the shooting. Falsely claiming that they were grooming kids because they hosted an all-ages Sunday brunch. Here are some of the quotes:
 - **Carlson** hosted a guest who said shootings would continue to happen "until we end this evil agenda that is attacking children."
 - **Tim Pool** tweeted: "We shouldn't tolerate pedophiles grooming kids. Club Q had a grooming event. How do prevent the violence and stop the grooming?"
 - **Matt Walsh**, who has 1.9 million YouTube subscribers, called the shooting "tragic" but doubled down on his attacks on drag queens. "Is it that hard to not crossdress in front of kids? Is the compulsion that overwhelming?" he asked in the video. "If it's causing this much chaos and violence, why do you insist on continuing to do it?"
 - <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/internet/right-wing-influencers-media-double-anti-lgbtq-rhetoric-wake-colorado-rcna58371>
- **Historical Note & Slippery Slope:** Just to put some additional historical context on the plight transgender people have faced in the past. There was a very prominent, ahead of its time transgender clinic in Germany that led the world in research and development of high-quality clinical care guidelines for LGBTQ+ patients... This clinic and all of its textbooks/research was the FIRST book burning committed by the Nazis. Take with that what you will. I'm not trying to implicate any proponent of this bill to that piece of history necessarily, but I hope that emphasizes what side of history your committee would be aligning yourself with if you passed this through.
 - <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-forgotten-history-of-the-worlds-first-trans-clinic/>
 - <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/lgbtq-institute-in-germany-was-burned-down-by-nazis>
 - <https://www.hmd.org.uk/resource/6-may-1933-looting-of-the-institute-of-sexology/>

I strongly urge you to vote NO on this bill and I thank you for your time and consideration.