

Annette Whaley
50 Lincoln Rd Apt 5-1
Brooklyn, NY 11225
agentwhaley@yahoo.com
(937) 515-1115

May 22, 2023

Chairman P. Scott Lipps
House Public Health Policy Committee
77 S. High Street
Floor 13
Columbus, OH 43215

Subject: Testimony Opposing House Bill 68

Dear Chairman Lipps and esteemed members of the Public Health Policy Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to House Bill 68, which seeks to restrict access to vital gender-affirming healthcare for minors in Ohio. As a concerned citizen and advocate for healthcare rights, I firmly believe that this bill would have detrimental effects on the well-being and rights of transgender youth in Ohio.

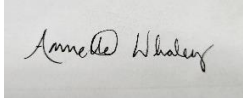
The concept of gender variance is not new. According to a National Geographic article, *How historians are documenting the lives of transgender people*, there is ample evidence of gender variance throughout human history in many different cultures. The discrimination and suppression of civil rights of those who challenge the gender binary is not a new either. Most notably in the United States, Indigenous Two-Spirited people were targeted by Europeans in the early 16th century where they were met with violence that rose to the level of genocide as referenced in Dr. Gregory Smithers' book, "Reclaiming Two-Spirits: Sexuality, Spiritual Renewal and Sovereignty in Native America".

Gender affirming care saves lives! Young trans and non-binary people need access to supportive care that uplifts their identity and lets them know that they are valued and belong. Anything else will produce mental health issues such as anxiety and depression which could lead to suicide in gender non-conforming youth. House Bill 68 perpetuates bullying and marginalization of trans youth. It is their inalienable right to be themselves. As a former Ohioan who is non-binary, I just want to be accepted for who I am. That's really all anyone ever wants to our core.

In conclusion, House Bill 68 represents a regressive and harmful approach to transgender healthcare for minors in Ohio. Rather than protecting the rights and well-being of transgender youth, it imposes unjustifiable limitations on their access to appropriate medical care and mental health support. I urge you to reject this bill and instead prioritize policies that promote inclusivity, respect individual autonomy, and prioritize the well-being and rights of transgender youth. It is essential to foster an environment where all individuals, regardless of their gender identity, can access the healthcare they need to live authentic and fulfilling lives. I implore you to consider the voices of transgender youth, their families, and healthcare professionals who advocate for comprehensive and affirming care. Let us work together to create a society that embraces diversity, equality, and compassion.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. I trust that you will carefully consider the concerns raised in this testimony and make a decision that upholds the values of fairness, dignity, and respect for all Ohioans.

Sincerely,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Annette Whaley".

Annette Whaley