

**HB 68 House Public Health Policy Committee**  
**Opponent Testimony**  
**May 24, 2023**

Chair Lipps, Vice Chair Steward, Ranking Member Liston, and Members of the House Public Health Policy Committee:

My name is Jennifer Suchland and I am a resident of Columbus. I am a parent, teacher, and concerned community member. I oppose HB 68.

Gender affirming care is scientifically sound and should be protected as a medical decision between patients and their doctors. The evidence presented for banning gender affirming care in HB 68 is based on spurious medical claims. If the sponsors of this bill truly had the best interests of children in mind, they would not try to ban gender affirming care. The sponsors would not privilege the stories the statistical outliers (people who “de-transition”) and would listen to the statistical majority for whom gender affirming care is safe and life-giving. I do not believe that science is the central argument against gender affirming care in HB 68. Rather, this attempt to control healthcare reflects the alarming national and global turn towards gender fascism.

I’d like you to think about gender affirming care as part of a much wider range of social norms related to gender. As you know, gender is not the same as biological sex. Gender is the social understanding of sex and how one presents and understands themselves. Gender norms change over time, and they differ across cultural contexts. There have been immense changes to gender norms. For example, the range of colors associated with male and female have changed. Pink was once associated with masculinity and power, whereas today it is associated with femininity and softness. There was a time when women were not allowed to wear pants and men would never have considered becoming nurses. These norms are not about what is normal but about whether society allows gender freedom. We all benefit from a society that allows gender freedom. All genders benefit from gender freedom — we are all allowed to be our authentic selves. Gender affirming care is a modern form of gender freedom.

Gender freedom is under threat today. In the United States, politicians are hunting down the most vulnerable people – trans youth — to control gender. I think this is bullying of the worst sort. The attack on trans youth is connected to the attack on women’s reproductive healthcare (such as access to legal abortion and birth control). Outside of the United States, countries like Russia are de-criminalizing domestic violence. Gender fascism attempts to control how people live in their bodies. Gender fascism is harmful and is violent. If passed, HB 68 will create more harm and violence — adolescents will be denied the care they need and deserve which will compound mental health duress. In addition, anti-trans bigoted people will be emboldened to harbor and even show their hate for people who do not conform to the narrowest expression of gender. Our country is founded on principles of freedom: freedom and assembly, freedom of speech, etc. Gender freedom is a basic human principle. I am opposed to HB 68 and to gender fascism. Please vote “no”.

