

## **Opponent Testimony on HB 68**

**O. Jacobs**

**May 23, 2023**

My family and I live in Mansfield, Ohio and enjoy riding on the carousel and getting donuts from Buckeye Bakery. I am a teacher and my husband is a business leader. We have enjoyed seeing our two children grow in this beautiful community. I am writing in opposition to HB 68.

When our oldest child was around 3 years old, she let us know that she was not the gender we thought she was. It all started with a dress. We thought she was a boy and treated her as one. She started playing with one of my old dress-up dresses and wanted to wear it to school. It was almost 30 years old and falling apart, so it would be a big distraction at school. When I told her, "No," her cries were not the normal cries of a kid not getting what they want. It was so much more than that. As a mother, the first thing you learn about your baby is to tell the difference in their cries.

The next step was a simple skirt that could go over any of her normal play clothes. She wore that skirt every single day for about a year. We started to read books and get resources for kids like her. And she started to try out new names. She finally picked a more typical "girl" name. Another year went by, now wearing more skirts and using the new name consistently. Then, when we would play hide-and-seek, we would try out different pronouns. That's when she told me that she liked it better when I said, "Where is she hiding?" After another year of the new pronoun, she let us know that she is nonbinary. Nonbinary means that she's not a boy or a girl. As she likes to say, there's no one way to be nonbinary. So the pronouns "she/her" stay, so do the skirts, but she's my child – not my "daughter."

Throughout all of these changes, we've watched our child bloom. In my almost 40 years, I have never met someone who has such a clear understanding of self. By listening to our child, we have supported and loved her.

She currently does not take any medicine to help her body align with her gender. However, as she approaches puberty, that is something our family will explore. We will be following the guidelines established by the American Academy of Pediatrics, just as we have with all her medical needs thus far in her childhood. If Ohio bans the medical care that our child needs, we will move out of Ohio. Keeping our child safe is the most important job of any parent.

Please vote no on HB 68.