

Opponent
HB68
R. Jacobs

I am a resident of Mansfield, Ohio and never thought I would live here. I spent time in major US cities from the time I was 18 years old. When I moved to Richland County, I was concerned that it would not be welcoming or supportive of my special needs child. However, I have found that this county and the people in it have embraced her at school, at the doctor, and in community activities. I continue to feel blessed that we have been welcomed in this community with grace and support.

Our kiddo was assigned male at birth. She now identifies as non-binary. 5 years ago, I did not know what non-binary was. I was very skeptical when my child first started saying she was not a boy. I thought it was a phase. I hoped it was a phase. But she was consistent, insistent and persistent about her non-binary identity. Even though I did not want to lose my little boy and even though my parents, my aunts and uncles, my siblings did not understand what was happening, we all found a way to accept and cherish my child for who she is.

I sincerely hope the representatives of this state can learn to accept all transgender youth for who they are. And furthermore, I sincerely hope that they can follow the guidelines set by medical professionals who understand that gender affirming care for trans youth can and in many cases does help to prevent mental health challenges that may lead to suicide. It breaks my heart to think that my kiddo will not only have to contend with being an outsider due to her gender identity, but will also not be able to do the things that “normal” kids get to do like play sports. Worse yet, in a state that has exceptional health care facilities like Cleveland Clinic, the government may decide to eschew the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations and instead pass a law that goes against doctors, children, and parents.

We have been to countless therapy and doctor appointments trying to ensure we do the best things we can to support and affirm her identify. We will protect her no matter what because that’s what parents do for their children. Please allow us to continue to live in this state paying taxes and raising our family. If this law passes, we will move away to a place that is more tolerant and welcoming of those who are different.