

## **LETTER IN OPPOSITION TO HB 68**

### **Leslie Dworkin, Dayton, OH**

HEAR the voices of parents, transgender people, and transgender allies when we say that gender-affirming healthcare is crucial for the physical and emotional well-being of transgender youth. My son, who was under the care of an experienced physician, was provided hormone treatment when he turned 16 and it was, and remains, a critical reason that he is flourishing personally, physically, and is an honors college student today. Both my husband and I made the decision to provide this healthcare to our child very carefully. We explored options. We researched. We listened. And, after careful consideration, and the consistent and persistent needs of our child, we began this life-saving treatment. Being transgender is simply who our son is; it cannot be denied or wished away, and we love and applaud his strength in asserting who he is.

How dare you take the choice of hormone treatment away from my family? That choice is ours to make and it is backed by the American Psychological Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and The American Association of Endocrinology. For me and my family, and the lives of countless others, this issue is profoundly personal. And this proposed legislation is a life-threatening, cruel, and ill-informed intrusion into the lives of those who know best: the families and medical professionals—not the politicians, who have neither the experience nor the detailed knowledge of the people involved. Make no mistake: lives depend on the outcome of HB68.

I understand that the questions and concerns regarding gender-affirming care are complicated. But the statistics are clear: gender dysphoria and suicidality are rampant among transgender youth and hormone treatment is an undisputed necessary option for the health and well-being of some trans people. My son would likely not be here today without it. If your concerns revolve around surgery for transgender minors, let's be clear: surgery is NOT standard healthcare for trans children. Just ask the experienced doctors; they know and will tell you that it is simply not true that performing surgery on transgender minors is standard, or even recommended, procedure.

Ohio should be a place that welcomes diversity and embraces its constituents—a place of tolerance and understanding. It shouldn't be a state that promotes an intrusion into the personal lives of its citizens, denies their rights, and blatantly disregards statistics and the advice of experts. This proposed legislation is cruel and ill-informed. We—the children, parents, and medical professionals—know what's best for our children. We—the children, parents, and medical professionals—know what's best for our children's physical and mental health. We—the children, parents, and medical professionals—demand that you keep life-saving and life-affirming medical healthcare in the hands of those who need it, and out of your political agenda. Lives, and the physical and mental health of our children, are at stake.