

May 22, 2023

Dear Chair Lipps, Vice Chair Stewart, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the Public Health Policy Committee;

I oppose HB68 with every fiber of my being. I'm a parent to a transgender kid, and we've been lucky that we had the freedom to choose the best healthcare options for our child. Mental health counseling, hormone blockers, and HRT saved our child's life.

We didn't make those decisions easily, each one was carefully thought out and in consultation with our child's medical team. We were informed all along about possible side effects, reversible and irreversible effects, and longitudinal outcomes. Our child has gone from a suicidal, self harming kid who didn't see a way to live in this world, to a 21 year old moving out into his first apartment with his long term (5 years!) partner, looking at jobs/careers/colleges to support their independent lives together.

He is kind, loving, creative, and brilliant, on the cusp of contributing to the world. The world almost lost out on all the things he'll do in his future, and I can't even bear to imagine how gray our world would be without him. He still struggles with depression and anxiety, because it runs in the family on both sides and because religious conservative bullies can't see the beauty in the diversity of all of our children. Our family has grown to be more flexible, adaptable, and stronger because of our differences. We use our differences as strengths, and lean on each other's strength's to make our way through life.

Please look to the WPATH research and guidelines as you think about this issue. Don't just listen to what other people tell you is the truth; go look at the medical research done by reputable organizations for yourself. There are many misrepresented studies, skewed statistics, and outright lies that have been told, trying to support this bill that would take away parental rights and take away healthcare access for children. Ask yourself, if there's so many harmed by these treatments, why do we keep hearing from the same witnesses, from out of State witnesses, and using the same words as the conservative extremist groups? There are thousands of family members across our Country who will tell you that the rate of regret is much lower than most other medical procedures, that these treatments save lives, and that any rare possible problems are worth keeping their children alive.

Please vote against HB68, and help Ohio families and their medical teams have access to the best healthcare decisions for their children. Support us as we fight for our kids' futures.

Thank you,
Gwendolen Jones
614-323-7450
45 Vernon Ave
Delaware, Ohio
43015