

May 23, 2023

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Stewart, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the Public Health Policy Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition of HB 68.

My name is Erin Staebler. I am a mother to a transgender child, and I live in Beth Lear's district.

Three years ago when my son came out to us, I did all I could to understand what he was going through. He talked and I listened. I just wanted to understand and be there for him. I listened to transgender voices to learn all that I could to understand what he may be going through. I had a lot to learn. Like any good parent, I wanted to get him any therapeutic and medical support he needed. The support we have received for him, for my husband and I, and our family has made such a difference in our lives. I can't imagine where we would be if we didn't have the support of medical professionals who serve transgender youth.

I can sincerely appreciate that House Bill 68 wants to protect children. However, this legislation is just not needed, and the impact of this bill would be devastating to children. The World Professional Association for Transgender Healthcare (WPATH) has written and continues to revise the [Standards of Care](#) for transgender and gender nonconforming youth "based on the best available science and expert professional consensus." The first version of these guidelines was published in 1979. Transgender people and gender nonconforming people have existed for millenia, so contrary to what the sponsor's testimony for HB68 states, this is not a modern, political phenomenon.

In our experience, the process to transition medically has been thoughtful and deliberate. The medical professionals strictly adhere to WPATH (World Professional Association for Transgender Health) standards of care, so the utmost caution is taken when providing medical care to transgender youth. Time and thoughtful conversation are a part of each appointment with each professional to support my son and our family. It has been nearly three years since my son began his social transition, and contrary to what is written in the sponsor's testimony, this process has been emotionally and medically thorough. As a result, providers have been conservative in offering medical intervention to alleviate my son's gender dysphoria. I am fortunate that I am able to access these resources. There has been so much to navigate in this journey that I can't imagine what our lives would be like if the Ohio Legislature chooses to make this process even more difficult or impossible for families who are just trying to get their children the medical care they need and deserve.

In regard to protecting children from making "a mistake" and wanting to detransition, the empirical data in this regard supports the fact that only [1% of transgender people detransition](#). From the article, "Research suggests that comprehensive psychological counseling before starting treatment, along with family support, can reduce chances for regret and detransitioning." By providing healthcare for transgender youth, these safeguards are put in place through the care and expertise of medical professionals to determine what other therapies or interventions are appropriate. This bill would make it impossible for Ohio families to access safe, effective medical care for a gender nonconforming or transgender or child.

I also know that the value most near and dear to every American is freedom. This bill would be taking away our freedom to access medical care for our children. I implore the committee and members of this legislative body to vote NO on House Bill 68, an un-American bill that is actively working to make medical care for transgender youth obsolete in the state of Ohio. This bill would also eliminate the freedom and access for transgender youth to access therapy and psychological evaluations which would determine the care a child needs. Instead of guarding freedom, this legislative body is attacking our most vulnerable youth population's access to medical care.

According to a [recent Fox News Poll](#), without the help of a list, less than 1% of those surveyed said that transgender issues were important to them. This means that when citizens are asked about issues that are important to them, only 1% of respondents stated transgender issues, so the vast majority of Americans do not prioritize this issue. I hope that our state legislature will get in better touch with what the American people want from those in positions of power.

I have lived in Ohio most of my life. Ohio is the place I call home. I implore this legislative body to follow the medical experts, science, and those constituents who currently reside in the state of Ohio and listen and take into strong consideration our testimony. Please protect all of our children by voting No on House Bill 68 and guarantee the freedom for all children in the state of Ohio to access healthcare. Thank you.

Sources:

<https://www.wpath.org/publications/soc>

<https://apnews.com/article/transgender-treatment-regret-detransition-371e927ec6e7a24cd9c77b5371c6ba2b>

<https://www.foxnews.com/official-polls/fox-news-poll-book-banning-transgender-issues-seen-problematic>