

Jennifer K. Kowalski Statement

Hi. My name is Jennifer Kowalski. Let's get my biases out of the way so you don't have to noodle them out on your own. I've lived in Ohio for about 28 years. I'm queer, and trans/nonbinary (I even have the blue hair to prove it). I'm 52 years old. Disabled. And my politics are somewhere to the left of Trotsky.

Basically, I'm Representative Click's worst nightmare.

I've been agonizing for days over what to say about this bill. I've read it multiple times. I've cried over its cruelty and raged over the ways it's misinterpreted and misrepresented the science and research around trans and nonbinary identities.

Around my 5th or 6th time through it hit me that the language in the declaration of "findings" seemed awful familiar.

It took me a five minute google search to figure out why.

HB 68 is a cut and paste bill. The "findings" come straight from a website that offers canned legislative language. The "findings" are simply parroted anti-trans arguments that have been trotted out and subsequently disproven for years now.

And then I realized. This isn't about kids. Or safety. Or freedom. Do you know who financially supports the organization that provided Representative Click this canned language? It's a group called the Alliance Defending Freedom. Those are the same "freedom loving folks" who supported the Ugandan government's "kill the gays" bill.

They're bullies.

Colonizing bullies who want to see LGBTQ+ "eradicated from the public sphere."

And bullies don't care about cruelty.

Or protecting children.

If they cared about protecting children, they would care about well-researched and carefully designed standards of care for trans and nonbinary kids recommended by legitimate medical and psychological organizations in the US and abroad.

It certainly seems counter-intuitive that someone who holds life to be sacred and cares for children would accept language that comes from an organization supporting a government kidnapping, torturing, and killing its LGBTQ+ citizens.

But, I reiterate, this isn't about caring for children or protecting them.

Bullies want power and control.

They want you to believe what they believe and if you don't, they at least want you under their control.

So, my statement isn't for Representative Click or his comrades. They're not here to listen. They're not here to serve their citizens. They're here to get elected and ensure that their base gets the type of cruelty they salivate over.

My statement is for anyone listening to my voice who wants to stand up to these bullies. We are strong together and we will fight for the kids in our community. Because those kids deserve to be loved, cared for, and protected from a government that wants to see them erased.

Trans and nonbinary folks have been around since there were people. And we've survived attempts to silence and get rid of us before. We'll survive this too and make a better life for each other.