

June 11, 2023

Chair Lipps, Vice Chair Stewart, Ranking Member Liston, and Members of the Public Health Policy Committee,

I submitted written testimony on HB 68 for the opponent testimony hearing on May 24, 2023; however, I am now amending my testimony to include a response to the line of questioning we heard repeatedly during that last hearing.

Specifically, Vice Chair Brian Stewart asked nearly every witness whether they support “surgically removing the penis and testicles of 15-year-old boys” and the “breasts of 15 year-old girls” throughout the hearing. In addition, Representative Angela King repeatedly asked witnesses if they support “removing” or “mutilating perfectly healthy body parts” from children.

Every medical professional who testified during that hearing confirmed that surgical procedures for gender-affirming care do not happen on children under the age of 18 in the state of Ohio. Despite having zero evidence to support their concerns, Representatives Stewart and King repeated this line of questioning to the point of being belligerent to the witnesses which I found completely unprofessional and offensive.

But I would like to ask: If members of this committee and the sponsor and co-sponsors of the bill are concerned about the mutilation of body parts, then we also need to take a good hard look at the mutilation of perfectly healthy body parts in hate crimes against the LGBTQ+ community such as in the Pulse Night Club mass shooting where 49 people were killed and 53 more were wounded – mutilating perfectly healthy body parts, and in the Club Q mass shooting where 5 people were killed and 17 more wounded, and the homicides of 221 transgender people who have been murdered since 2017 when data was first tracked (17). The homicide rate of transgender people has doubled in the last 4 years because of the very real threat that this hateful anti-trans agenda is having on transgender people (17). **If you are so concerned about mutilating perfectly healthy body parts, you would stop this dangerous bill which is doing actual harm to transgender people, rather than pushing a false narrative about surgeries that do not happen and which medical professionals have repeatedly testified simply is not true.**

With that, I will share the remainder of my previous written testimony:

My name is Laura Robertson-Boyd. I live in Columbus, Ohio with my husband of 25 years. We are proud parents of two transgender children. I am writing to defend my children – and all Ohio transgender children – from the harmful threats posed by House Bill 68.

HB 68 is dangerous because it denies transgender and non-binary children access to evidence-based health care deemed medically necessary by their health care providers. **It completely interferes with and strips away parents’ rights** to make the best decisions about their children’s health care in partnership with physicians and counselors.

How dare this Legislature presume to tell me that I have no right to do what is best for my children? Why do the sponsor, Representative Click, and the 39 co-sponsors think that state Legislators somehow know better than I do what is best for my children? And why do they think that denying healthcare to one specific group of children is OK? **All Ohio children deserve the right to medically necessary care without government interference and overreach.** In fact, federal law mandates it! (1)

As a parent, my greatest fear for my children is the risk of suicide if they cannot receive the medically necessary healthcare they require to survive and thrive. HB 68 would deny my children that care, putting them at greater risk of suicide.

My second greatest fear for my children is the risk of harm from others who want to attack them out of hate simply for who they are. HB 68 represents just that: it is nothing more than bullying and state-sponsored abuse. **As a mother, I am incredulous that the Ohio Legislature would intentionally putting my children's lives at risk with this dangerous bill.**

Let's be clear what HB 68 is really about: This is not about protecting parents' rights, or you wouldn't be trampling on my rights as a parent. This is not about protecting children, or you would care more about the harm this bill would do and is currently doing to transgender youth.

This bill is part of the larger effort to eradicate transgender people out of existence. Michael Knowles of *The Daily Wire* said the quiet part out loud at this year's CPAC (Conservative Political Action Conference) in March: He said, "...for the good of society and especially for the good of the poor people who have fallen prey to this confusion, transgenderism must be eradicated from public life entirely. There can be no middle way in dealing with transgenderism. It is all or nothing" (2).

According to a March 2023 report titled "Under Fire: The War on LGBTQ People in America" by the Movement Advancement Project, **over 650** anti-LGBTQ bills have been introduced in 46 states **this year** alone – many of them targeting transgender people specifically (3). HB 68 is just one of many such attacks here in the Ohio Legislature.

As the number of legislative attacks on transgender people has increased, we have seen a corresponding increase in **extreme transphobia being stoked and weaponized, instilling real fear of violence** among transgender folks and we families who love them. These dangers include:

- The hate crime mass shooting at Club Q in Colorado Springs last November – on Transgender Day of Remembrance
- Multiple drag shows across Ohio interrupted by armed Nazis and domestic terrorists threatening violence (4,5,6,7)
- Libs of TikTok inciting bomb threats against children's hospitals that provide gender affirming care, including here in Ohio at Akron Children's Hospital (8)
- Kiwi Farms doxxing and swatting transgender people, putting their lives at risk (9)
- People in our own community who have been doxxed and stalked simply for testifying against these hateful anti-trans bills

- The Ohio state Board of Education passing a resolution last fall that denies anti-discrimination protections for LGBTQ+ students, putting them at great risk for bullying and harassment at school (10)
- Outside agitators and national hate groups suing our local school boards and threatening physical violence against LGBTQ+ students (11,12,13)
- And extremist legislators, backed by hate groups such as Alliance Defending Freedom and the Center for Christina Virtue (14), pushing hundreds of hateful anti-trans bills across the country – sending the constant message that transgender people do not have a right to exist in American society. **Already, Florida has become so dangerous for transgender people that it has been put on a “DO NOT TRAVEL” alert (15). Will Ohio be next?**

I say it is time to **STOP this madness**. Stop harassing children. Stop threatening medical providers and hospitals. Stop denying parents the right and the freedom to make medical decisions for our kids.

Let’s not make Ohio’s laws so dangerous and draconian that our young people can’t wait to leave the state and families like mine are forced to leave for our own safety. Ohio’s economy already ranks low at 37th in the country (16), and it will only get worse as businesses will not be able to recruit talented and skilled employees. There aren’t enough cis-gender, heterosexual, evangelical, white men like **“Demon Dude”** to keep Ohio’s economy going. Vote NO on HB 68.

Sincerely,
 Laura Robertson-Boyd

Footnotes

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