

Chair Lipps and present committee members, I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you this morning on a topic that is the focus of my practice as a social worker and therapist. My name is Sarah Boesger, and I am an MSW and LSW licensed in Ohio since 2021. Social work is my second career, one I pursued voraciously as a single mom working full time and going to school full time. I take my social work degree, licensure and career with the utmost seriousness, and I take my position of influence over my clients even more seriously. I have worked with and continue to work with many trans and nonbinary clients under the age of 18, and assisting them on their journeys has been the most rewarding part of my career. I know, beyond any doubt, that if the work I do and countless other providers do with these young people was threatened or erased, death will be the result. We are talking death by suicide. We need to say the words. All of my clients will tell you I don't dance around words or concepts. This bill's passage will result in young people of trans, nonbinary and intersex experience taking their own lives. I know this because I have been told this by my clients. Gender affirming care saves lives. We know that every major medical association in the US accepts and recommends gender-affirming care for young people. In fact, the WPATH standards of care recently added an entire section dedicated to children and adolescents. Every industry has best practice standards, and the passage of this bill would negate the best practice standards established for care providers of trans, nonbinary and intersex young people. We are dangerously moving toward legislatively approved genocide of a vulnerable population. I made a promise at my licensure that I would advocate for my clients, and standing by while their lives are threatened negates that promise. I am asking this committee to protect my practice, protect my clients and their families, and protect the lives and practices of all young people of trans, nonbinary and intersex experience and their dedicated providers. Those of us doing the work know the risk posed by this bill. Please do not ask us to watch our clients die or go to prison because we provided the care they need. Please vote no on HB 68.