December 1, 2023

Dear members of the Government Oversight Committee,

My name is Iva, I'm a detransitioned woman, and I'm writing to you in opposition to House Bill 68.

My story is similar to that of many detransitioned women I've met. In Pennsylvania, I started my transition at age 19, and detransitioned at age 25. I was on testosterone HRT for 5 years, changed my legal name, & had multiple surgeries (complete with permanent negative complications such as chronic pain). I went the "whole nine yards" and back again. I have many regrets, and many disappointments in the care I received… and even still, I oppose legislation like HB68.

I'm 31 now, and I've been watching public discussion around trans healthcare and detransition take a nosedive over the last 6 years, most recently resulting in bills like the one being discussed today. I oppose legislative involvement across the board, especially when bans and restrictions are involved. I think it only serves to make things *worse* for everyone. It certainly does nothing to help detransitioners.

I don't want legislation that closes clinics or forces families to seek medical care out of their home state. I also don't want language around gender transition and care codified in law, where it's slow and difficult to update. This area of medicine has been shifting rapidly, and it needs the room to continue doing so — laws like these stifle progress and innovation.

In fact, as a detransitioner, awareness and innovation are the things I've wanted most from my doctors. When I detransitioned, I felt a deep lack of understanding, support, and guidance. I went from feeling like I was walking a path that was at least a *little* time-tested by others, to falling off a cliff into a great unknown with no safety nets or guidance.
There weren't even protocols for the doctors at my gender clinic to follow when I told them I was detransitioning, had stopped taking my testosterone, and needed a new HRT regimen due to being post-hysterectomy. They had to fumble and make things up as they went along — not exactly comforting or trust-inspiring.

I've been waiting for doctors and trans-affirmative medical orgs to get on the ball with supporting detransitioners, acknowledging our existence, learning from our experiences, and working toward the next phase of trans healthcare: where ideally *nobody* will be left suffering or regretting what they've gone through, and in the instances they do, they will immediately receive the support they need to minimize the pain and impact on their overall wellbeing. It shouldn't have to be as traumatizing, intimidating, or isolating as it was for me.

6 years ago, when I was early in my detransition, I was hopeful that the early rumblings about the phenomenon of detransition were going to inspire advocates and healthcare professionals to take *action*. To me, it seems logical that incorporating our experiences into trans healthcare would lead to better outcomes for everyone.

But that never happened. Instead, trans advocates have focused on denying and minimizing the reality of detransition out of fear of bans like the very one on the table in Ohio. Instead of gaps being bridged, they've been widened. It feels like every time another bill like this gets circulated, we get a little further from making things better. Progress, collaboration, and innovation are being smothered at their earliest sparks.

I don't know what to say other than, "I'm disappointed and very, very tired."

If the legal system really has to be involved, why not focus on ways to ensure that detransitioners are being supported, included, and studied?

Why not, for instance, use your legislative powers to form a public Detransition & Innovation Oversight Board? It could be a group of some well-respected medical professionals and some neutral parties, who have a mandated charge to investigate detransition, reach out to people lost to followup, and find ways to use their experiences to inform & improve the trans healthcare process, with the goal of reducing the rate of regret and other negative outcomes, and building networks of support. Why not write up requirements for how often such a committee publicly reports on what they've done and what progress they've made?

I don't want clumsy, uninformed language around sex and gender codified into laws that apply widespread bans.

What I want is **accountability**.
I want smart people to get together, step up to the challenge, put their brains together, and make things better for detransitioners and people with negative care experiences.
I want conference rooms booked and butts in seats.
I want difficult discussions happening on a recurring basis.
I want to see an avenue open up for struggling patients to turn to – one that doesn't involve having intimate and painful details about their lives being used as public trauma fodder for strangers in the hopes that *someone* will listen & learn from what happened to them.

Healthcare bans don't inspire positive action toward that accountability. They just get us further away.

If legislative action has to be involved at all, I think it should be focused on stirring commitment & movement toward more rigorous healthcare practices, not on shutting things down before they have the chance to improve. Patients and their families deserve better.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Iva Goldsmith