



## GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Witness Form

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization Representing: \_\_\_\_\_

Testifying on Bill Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Testimony:    \_\_\_\_\_ Verbal        \_\_\_\_\_ Written        \_\_\_\_\_ Both

Testifying As:    \_\_\_\_\_ Proponent        \_\_\_\_\_ Opponent        \_\_\_\_\_ Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist?    \_\_\_\_\_ Yes        \_\_\_\_\_ No

Special Requests: \_\_\_\_\_

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12/6/2023

State Senator Kristina Roegner  
Senate Building  
1 Capitol Square  
1st Floor  
142  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

**Regarding House Bill 68:**

Dear Chairman Roegner, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and the rest of the Government Oversight Committee,

Thank you for reviewing my testimony **in opposition** to HB 68. My name is Carson Hartlage, and I am writing to you as a concerned citizen, a medical student, and a native Ohioan who is also proudly transgender. According to the title, HB 68 aims to save children and athletes in Ohio, but I am testifying to protect trans youth from this harmful bill.

I was a trans kid in Ohio. While I did not grow up in an environment that supported my trans identity or allowed me access to gender-affirming care, I do remember my childhood being filled with shame and a deep, pervasive discomfort with who I was and how I looked. I was a kid who considered taking my own life on multiple occasions because I didn't see an escape or believe I had a life past 18. This is not a unique experience. A study [found](#) that among transgender youth, 50% of male teens, 30% of female teens, and 42% of nonbinary youth reported attempting suicide in their lifetime, and [more than half](#) consider it.

Thousands of trans kids today don't have to wait a decade for gender-affirming care like I did; they are receiving this lifesaving care right now, with the support of their parents/guardians and under the supervision of expert physicians. This care is making them happier and healthier.

Gender-affirming care IS healthcare. It's what has allowed me to pursue medicine and have the privilege of writing to you today as a trans adult. As a future physician, I am trained to evaluate scientific evidence and learn the standard of care. Gender-affirming care for youth is supported by nearly every major medical organization in the United States, including the [American Medical Association](#), the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), and our own [Ohio State Medical Association](#). It is backed also by strong scientific evidence. For example, a [study](#) of almost three thousand transgender youth ages 13 to 17 found that those who received gender-affirming hormone therapy (GAHT) had lower odds of recent depression and suicide attempts in the past year compared to those who wanted GAHT but did not receive it. Another [study](#) associated GAHT with increased positive affect and life satisfaction and decreased depression and anxiety symptoms.

Gender-affirming care is not experimentation. A randomized controlled trial is not necessary to treat these kids, because we already know that it is safe and effective. According to [experts](#), it is not the correct methodology to evaluate adolescent transgender healthcare. If this weren't about identity politics or a question of the humanity of trans kids, we would not be debating whether the state government should intervene in the treatment of childhood asthma or juvenile arthritis. The only experiment happening right now is how much harm states who pass these bans can do. Let's not let Ohio join this group.

In conclusion, this bill would:

1. Prohibit physicians from practicing evidence-based medicine by inserting the government into the physician-patient relationship.
2. Force already vulnerable trans children to discontinue their life-saving care and strip their parents of their ability to consent to this care.
3. Send a message to the thousands of trans youth in Ohio that they don't matter.

No teenager should have to watch their rights be debated at their statehouse. Trans youth, their families, and the rest of the trans community belong in Ohio, and we deserve healthcare.

Therefore, I call upon all members of the Committee to **oppose** House Bill 68. Please do not allow this harmful bill to pass into the Senate.

Thank you for your consideration,

Carson Hartlage (they/them & he/him), MD/PhD Student