

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Government Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in strong opposition to House Bill 68.

My name is Glen McClain. I am resident of Northside in Cincinnati and a sixth-year MD-JD student. As a future physician, I'm appalled that my state legislature, composed of just a handful of physicians, is considering eliminating healthcare for a marginalized community that makes up just 0.45% of Ohio's population. As a licensed attorney, I'm disturbed that this legislation is only a few steps from becoming law despite clearly violating Article 1, Section 21(B) of the Ohio Constitution prohibiting government interference in the sale of health care or health insurance.

But rather than belabor on either point, I would like to speak to you in terms that might be more persuasive- money. While Ohio's transgender community may be small, the negative economic impact of anti-transgender legislation will be felt by all Ohioans.

It's no coincidence that five of the ten states with the worst economic performance in 2022- Iowa, North Dakota, Louisiana, Mississippi, and West Virginia- have anti-trans legislation. Soundbites and headlines that play into the culture wars at the expense of transgender persons may generate revenue for individual lawmakers, but they do not do the same for the state. After North Carolina passed one of the most restrictive anti-trans bills in the country, the state lost more than \$600 million in revenue and thousands of jobs after corporations like PayPal and the NBA withdrew huge revenue streams from the state. Increased economic costs in these states with myopic views on LGBTQ rights are not simply driven by the reduced activity of third parties. Rather, states themselves contribute. In Georgia, rather than cover the cost of gender affirming surgery for a sheriff's deputy, the county that employed her paid more than \$1 million to fight the case in federal court, far more than the estimated \$10,000 it would have cost to offer such coverage to all plan members. In Ohio, if House Bill 68 passes, there will surely be expensive, time-consuming litigation, the cost of which will be felt largely by taxpayers, drawing the entire state into a manufactured culture war to which it did not consent.

Anti-trans legislation will also inhibit innovation and development in the state of Ohio. For years, Ohio has struggled to keep college graduates in the state, losing more grads than it takes in to states like Illinois, New York, and California. If the post-*Dobbs* reduction in OB-GYN residency applications to states with restrictive abortion bans is any indication of what's to come, Ohio can expect an absence of qualified young people settling in Ohio after finishing school. Not only will the resulting "gay brain drain" exacerbate existing struggles retaining top talent, it will hinder development already made in technology and engineering across the state, all but ensuring the quick decline of Ohio's economic performance among other states.

If House Bill 68 becomes law, Ohio will also likely lose millions of dollars in tourism. In 2016, after Tennessee Republicans passed a bill allowing counselors to deny LGBTQ clients based on religious grounds, three conferences backed out of existing contracts and dozens more chose another state due to the bill, costing more than \$60 million in direct visitor spending. At its most recent meeting in November, the American Medical Association debated withdrawing from contracts formed nearly a decade ago to protect the safety of its LGBTQ members from exclusionary policies in states like Florida and Texas. People pay attention to anti-trans

legislation, and Ohio's tourism industry may never recover from the pandemic if Ohio becomes a statistic on a list of hostile states for LGBTQ people.

The economic impact of House Bill 68 will not be limited to metropolitan areas, however. In Indiana, after the passage of a religious liberty bill that permitted LGBTQ discrimination, economic development grants and business investments in the state largely went to local municipalities with anti-discrimination ordinances, meaning that small, rural cities missed out on millions of dollars in potential funding. In a state like Ohio where nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of counties are considered rural, a similar outcome will only exacerbate urban-rural inequities in funding and economic development.

Notwithstanding House Bill's obvious preemption by the Ohio Constitution and its contrast to national medical standard of care, it will be detrimental to the economic health of Ohioans and the future of this state. With a combined buying power of over \$800 billion, LGBTQ adults should not be underestimated, and state law should not unduly antagonize this group.

Thank you.
Glen McClain, J.D.