

Opponent Testimony, HB 68
House Public Health Policy Committee

Committee Chair Roegner, Vice-Chair Antani, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Government Oversight Committee, thank you for providing the opportunity for me to provide testimony.

My name is Aliza Mann, my pronouns are she/her/hers, and I am a licensed independent social worker. I am writing testimony today to express opposition to HB 68, which would cause harm to transgender and gender diverse minors in Ohio as well as create barriers for social workers to engage in ethical practice.

Gender-affirming care is evidence-based best practice, supported by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the American Psychiatric Association, and the American Medical Association. All children have the best chance to thrive when they have access to the care they need. Not only does HB 68 ban medically necessary care, but it also prevents supportive parents from getting their child the care they need. The medical decisions for youth should rest with parents and doctors – not politicians.

The social work Code of Ethics, as defined by NASW, tasks social workers with providing evidence-based care and refraining from discrimination based on sex, gender identity, and gender expression. HB 68 would directly contradict this mandate, as social workers may be required to “out” youth to their caregivers before it is safe to do so. This practice is not evidence-based and has dangerous implications for the wellbeing of youth.

HB 68 would also require mental health practitioners to obtain additional parental permission for gender-affirming care. There are already standards in place to ensure that mental health professionals obtain parental consent for services. This bill is discriminatory in creating additional barriers solely for transgender and gender-diverse youth. Additional rules and regulations paired with threat of discipline will deter social workers from entering a field that is already struggling to maintain staff.

HB 68 is putting the lives and well-being of transgender and gender-diverse youth at risk. Research shows that medical care and support to transgender and gender-diverse youth are crucial to their wellbeing. Denying this care puts these youth at increased risk of depression, social isolation, self-hatred, self-harm, and suicidal thoughts or behavior. I implore you to consider the harmful effects that HB 68 will have on youth when you place your vote.

I want to thank you again for the opportunity to submit written testimony in opposition of this bill. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions at 937-956-9174 or alizamann7@gmail.com

Sincerely,
Aliza Mann, LISW-S