

Chair Roegner and the Oversight Committee,

HB 68 should not be allowed to even go to a floor vote. This is considered one of the most extreme anti-transgender laws in the country, forcing kids who are already receiving treatment to stop their medications. Preventing doctors from giving puberty blockers to children, even with parent's consent is wrong. These blockers do nothing to harm children, only delaying the onset of puberty while the child and caregivers explore options and develop a path forward. Hormone therapy has been proven safe, and effective. Hence why **the American Academy of Pediatrics supports both hormone therapy and puberty blockers. Pediatricians are the people who should be making the call about what is medically appropriate, not politicians.**

Furthermore, preventing mental health professionals from even talking about the topics of transgender and gender dysphoria with any minor without permission from both parents is absurd. **A child has a right to talk to their doctor about therapies approved by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Furthermore, criminalizing doctors, counselors, social workers, etc. from recommending treatment elsewhere will only force a child to look on the internet rather than talk with knowledgeable and trusted adults.**

Parents have a right to make decisions about medically safe and AAP approved procedures. Elected officials do not. How can the sponsors and supporters of this bill claim to respect parent's rights when this bill aims to take those rights away?

Additionally, the legislature has no business inserting itself into Ohio high school sports. The Ohio High School Athletic Association already has policies and procedure in place when it comes to transgender athletes. One that has protected the fairness of sports since it began. Proponents seem to think this about protecting women's sports, but **trans athletes are not dominating Ohio sports. So, where's the crisis?**

The true crisis is the fact that transgender youth reported significantly increased rates of depression, suicidality, and victimization compared to their cisgender peers. Notably, in the past year, one in three transgender youth reported attempting suicide, almost one-third reported being a victim of sexual violence, and more than half reported a two-week period of depression. Why? Because bills like this one prevent them from getting the care they need, knowing that care exists, and makes them feel alone and alienated from society. **Marginalizing 1.8% of youth with bills like this is NOT loving, caring, or kind.**

This bill is NOT something the Ohio legislature should be considering and I urge you to vote against it going to the floor for a vote.

Respectfully,

Min. Brian Saxe