

December 5, 2023

Ohio Senate, Government Oversight Committee, Senator Roegner (Chair)  
1 Capitol Square  
Columbus, OH 43215

To Senator Roegner and members of the Ohio Senate Government Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to House Bill 68.

Please allow me to add my voice to the large volume of testimony from your constituents throughout the state in opposition of House Bill 68. By the sheer volume of testimony already offered in committee and communications that you have received from the citizens you serve, it should already be abundantly clear that not only is House Bill 68 a negative movement against the health, safety, and well-being for the citizens of Ohio, but is also going against the will of the people who elected this chamber.

Medical professionals, sociologists, professional educators, and other highly qualified people have already provided the facts and figures to demonstrate that the direction of House Bill 68 will endanger the mental and physical health of many citizens in the state. These are evidence-based findings and not merely individual stories or anecdotes from a small number of people that have been handpicked to suite the authors of this bill.

I testify as a parent, a husband, and a lifelong citizen of this state for over 50 years. My testimony is as a person who knew my entire life would be lived in the State of Ohio as a place that is safe, welcoming, respectful, and idyllic in which to grow and support my family. I write as a taxpayer, who has been proud to serve as a public servant, promote education from pre-K through higher education, and as an IT professional in the community. I testify as a support of my wife, who has dedicated her life to mental health in Ohio, including as a founder of a non-profit focused on serving those in need.

Most importantly, I testify in support of my daughter, who has already been vilified by the existence of this bill and will be further alienated and endangered if it passes. For my family, we will follow the same path as those from Tennessee and the few other states that have enacted these hateful laws:

We will leave the state.

We must re-locate to a place in which we can support our children, teach them what true democracy is like, and find a place in which they will thrive.

- Support of this bill is the opposite of “limited government” and individual freedom.
- Support of this bill is against the will of the people that you serve.
- Support of this bill damages public health and endangers individual health.
- Support of this bill ignores the voices of the majority and those necessary for a strong democracy.
- Support of this bill will immediately reduce the number of tax payers in the State of Ohio. Future corporate decisions will be made considering that some of the brightest minds will see the State of Ohio as hateful.

For movement as drastic as this, has the committee considered the breadth of studies and expertise from the medical community? Has the committee considered the negative economic impacts to Ohio’s economy? Has the committee truly assessed the will of citizens of the State of Ohio? If this bill comes to a vote, Ohio citizens must assume that the legislature has handpicked negative opinions that support political ambitions.

I pray that this committee weighs the volume, legitimacy, and passion of existing testimony to keep the bill from advancing out of committee.

Thank you for your consideration,

Brandon Smith  
Westerville, Ohio