

Opponent Testimony for Senate Bill 68

Senate Government Oversight Committee

May 22, 2023

PFLAG Columbus

PFLAG Columbus is submitting formal testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 68, known as the Saving Adolescents from Experimentation Act. As the oldest and largest LGBTQ+ advocacy organization in the United States, PFLAG Columbus supports the autonomy and rights of all people to receive healthcare guided by medical professionals. HB 68 and other anti LGBTQ+ bills pending in the Ohio legislature represent a direct attack on the human rights of LGBTQ+ people, particularly transgender youth. Families with transgender youth would be irreparably harmed if this bill passes. In fact, we are aware of numerous families in the state who would be forced to leave if they could no longer access appropriate health care for their children who identify as transgender.

In the United States of America, government does not get to decide who is deserving of health care and who is not, and politicians don't get to trump physicians, psychiatrists, and medical professionals that provide evidence-based care. We urge the committee to use reason and be guided by science and medical professionals, who overwhelmingly agree that gender affirming care is the standard of care for children and adolescents who identify as transgender. When a child comes out as transgender, as a parent, one naturally seeks help from providers specializing in gender related issues and providing care to people experiencing the same. Taking this right away does not "save" transgender children in any way from experimentation. We know for a fact that the care provided by organizations such as our own Nationwide Childrens' Hospital is individualized and tailored to each person and does not always constitute hormones or surgery. Medical care is an intensely personal decision best left to medical professionals and families, and not religious zealots who believe that two people regretting their choices constitutes banning this healthcare for all. If we abided by that rhetoric, we should look into banning cosmetic procedures and virtually any surgery that comes with a margin of regret. Where is the line drawn?

The narrative that parents or the healthcare system is somehow "grooming" or convincing people to identify as transgender is patently false. Please do not fall victim to the culture wars being perpetrated against transgender people at this moment in history. Discrimination against anyone based on identity has no place in our country, regardless of whether this identity conforms to mainstream culture. Thank you for time and consideration of how passage of this bill would directly harm Ohio's families by discriminating against them.