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December 4, 2023

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and Members of the Senate Government Oversight Committee:

My name is Erin Upchurch, my pronouns are she/her. I am a parent of two young adults, an independently licensed social worker and former therapist in the state of Ohio, and the Executive Director of [Kaleidoscope Youth Center](#); Ohio's largest and longest standing organization to serve and support LGBTQIA+ youth and young adults ages 12-24.

I am writing to express absolute opposition to HB 68.

HB 68 is blatant discrimination. This bill unnecessarily targets transgender and non binary youth, their families; and allied providers and health professionals. HB 68 politicizes the lives of young people in Ohio, with zero regard for their health and well-being; and is an egregious misuse of power, and a breach of public trust in caring for the youth of Ohio.

As an independently licensed social worker, this bill is in direct opposition to the National Association Social Work [Values and Code of Ethics](#), such as self determination, informed consent, privacy and confidentiality; and commitment to clients.

This bill compromises the rights of parents/guardians by disrupting their ability to care for and make evidence based healthcare decisions that are best for their children, with the guidance of experienced and licensed medical providers.

Currently, the [Ohio revised code indicates](#) that minors aged 14 and up can consent to their own mental health treatment without consent or knowledge of the minors guardian (as long as it does not include treatment with medication). **This legislation denies the already determined best practices of mental health treatment and care.**

Elected officials stripping away the autonomy of parents and children to make the kinds of medical decisions that would be best for them is absurd. **Sponsors and proponents of this bill are grossly out of scope**, which means they are making recommendations and medical decisions for others that are outside of their expertise and education. In most professions, **this type of practice is considered unethical**.

Leading medical groups recognize the medical necessity of gender affirming care, many of which are listed below:

- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
- American Academy of Dermatology
- American Academy of Family Physicians
- American Academy of Nursing
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Academy of Physician Assistants
- American College Health Association
- American College of Nurse-Midwives
- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
- American College of Physicians
- American Counseling Association
- American Heart Association
- American Medical Association
- American Medical Student Association
- American Nurses Association
- American Osteopathic Association
- American Psychiatric Association
- American Psychological Association
- American Public Health Association
- American Society of Plastic Surgeons
- Endocrine Society
- Federation of Pediatric Organizations
- GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality
- National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
- National Association of Social Workers
- National Commission on Correctional Health Care
- Pediatric Endocrine Society
- Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine
- World Medical Association
- World Professional Association for Transgender Health

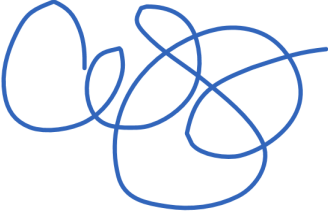
HB 68 centers the biases and misunderstandings of adults, and is out of touch with the actual needs of young people in Ohio. Ohio's youth and young adults deserve more. They deserve better from the adults and leaders put into positions of power in interest of supporting and promoting their thriving. Legislation and policies such as HB 68 do nothing to protect any child or young person; and instead, only further marginalize and promote harm. This is bullying behavior.



Moving this legislation forward would demonstrate a complete lack of regard and concern for the lives, futures, and perhaps, most importantly, the humanity of Ohio's youth.

Please reject HB 68.

Sincerely,



Erin Upchurch, MSSA, LISW-S
Executive Director
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