

Opponent Testimony for HB68
Senate Government Oversight Committee
December 06, 2023

Miranda Hall, M.S. Psychology, Non-Medical Health Advocate
Private Citizen

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

Thank you for allowing me the time to testify today in regard to House Bill 68, the proposed ban of gender affirming care for youth. My name is Miranda Hall, She/They pronouns.

I am a private citizen, who is a part of the LGBTQIA+ community, as both a queer and non-binary person. Beyond personal connections to the LGBTQIA+ community, I have worked in the behavioral health field for five years, primarily with children aged 6-18, before transitioning to my current position as a case manager for people living with HIV.

I am here in full opposition of House Bill 68.

I grew up in a small village in central Ohio and graduated in 2015 at the top of my class. In my high school class there were 85 students, out of 85 of us, there was one person who had the bravery to come out as bisexual and later as agender. I witnessed this person experience such intense bullying that it not only caused me to delay coming out myself for fear of the reactions to those around me, but also caused me to actively deny my identity for years. I have also had the privilege of working with several trans youth in the midst of their transitions who were denied access to gender affirming care. This caused not only demonstrable negative effects on their social behaviors, but also caused spikes in depression and both suicidal ideation and attempts.

Bills like HB 68 are popping up across the country with a lack of true understanding of how trans youth are accessing gender affirming care. We hear words such as “mutilation” thrown around in an attempt to incite fear in the general populace. Gender affirming care for youth follows a very clear set of standards known as the W-path. The first step in this intervention is therapy, not just one or two sessions, but ongoing therapy. Prior to any sort of medical intervention, the trans person must receive a diagnosis of gender dysphoria. Bills like this, that specifically spell out restrictions regarding surgery, are using cleverly disguised misinformation to propel the fear forward. Trans youth are not receiving surgeries unless extraordinary circumstances occur, which occurs with cis-gender youth, too. The earliest age a trans person may receive top surgery is 16 and bottom surgery is 17, however even these minimum ages are incredibly rare. In the

cases where top surgery is done at 16 or 17, it is typically due to other underlying conditions, such as cancerous tissue within the breasts.

Restricting or outright banning access to gender affirming care for youth will cause a multitude of negative repercussions. Current data suggests that upwards of over 80% of trans individuals have considered suicide and over 40% have attempted, with the highest percentage of those with suicidality being trans youth (Austin et al., 2022). We see that when trans people are given access to gender affirming care the suicidality rate drops by a minimum of 30% (Jackson, 2023). If all gender affirming care is banned, then this runs this risk of the number of attempts and ideation increasing beyond what it is already at. In house bill 68, guidelines are given to mental health professionals to track and report their minor clients who are experiencing gender dysphoria. This is incredibly dangerous. Not only could this result in the minor being outed before they are ready, or in a safe space to, which can lead to the minor being kicked out or abused emotionally, psychological or physically by community or even family. Additionally, HB 68 opens the door for open discrimination of trans individuals, who are not currently a protected class, by serving as legal permission to erase trans individuals from the public eye..

I cannot in my heart believe that this state would knowingly allow- no- cause the increased risk of suicide among young people. Many people who support this bill would also claim themselves to be pro-life, so why is it that you would vote to enact a bill that directly ends the lives of young people? Why is it that once the child is born you no longer care about their life?

I ask you to consider all of the testimonies heard today in opposition to house bill 68, and the many Ohioans who are asking you to protect their children from transphobic hate. If you truly want to protect the childrens you claim to, then protect all children including the trans

Thank you for your time and I will do my best to answer any questions you may have.

Fervently,
Miranda Hall

Citations:

Austin, A., Craig, S. L., D'Souza, S., & McInroy, L. B. (2022). Suicidality Among Transgender Youth: Elucidating the Role of Interpersonal Risk Factors. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 37(5-6), NP2696–NP2718. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260520915554>

Jackson D. (2023). Suicide-Related Outcomes Following Gender-Affirming Treatment: A Review. *Cureus*, 15(3), e36425. <https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.36425>