

December 5, 2023

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

My name is Lucinda Isaacs, and my pronouns are she/her. I am a minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA) and am currently living and serving in the Cincinnati-area.

I am painfully aware that we are debating this legislation during a season of the church calendar called Advent. This is when church prepares for the mystery of incarnation. As a matter of faith, I believe that when people embody their deepest held beliefs that this is a pathway to healing and wholeness. Gender identity is a firmly held belief of being male, female, both, or neither. Barriers to embodying that belief, either socially, medically or even existentially, can cause significant distress. That firmly held belief is not a choice, trend, or phase.

One of the first times I began to embody my truth as a result of gender affirming care was three days after beginning HRT was Christmas Eve two years ago. On Christmas Eve, my task is to take the mystery of all eternity entering into infancy as simple as possible. This embodiment, I believe, invites humans to embody our deepest truths.

I looked out from the pulpit I brought out my soothing, meditative voice to quote the fourth century theologian Augustine: "Behold who you are." There was a stillness with me that night that I had never felt before. It was the calmness that my spouse described as "being calmer than ever before in my life" when I entered therapy about my gender dysphoria. I finished my breath and spoke Augustine's next words: "Become what you receive."

I believe it is wrong to deny anyone the calmness and peace of embodying your identity. The distress caused by the incongruence between gender identity and assigned gender is not inconsequential. House Bill 68 would ban critical, gender-affirming healthcare for minors, while further stigmatizing the transgender and non-binary community and their needs. Important medical decisions should remain between youths, their families, and medical providers – not our politicians.

I urge you to vote no on House Bill 68.

Sincerely,

Lucinda Isaacs