

December 4, 2023

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Antani, and Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson,

My name is Laura Robertson-Boyd. My pronouns are she/her/hers. My husband of 26 years and I are proud parents of two transgender kids. I am writing to defend my children – and all Ohio transgender children – from the harmful threats posed by House Bill 68.

HB 68 is dangerous because it denies transgender and non-binary children access to evidence-based health care deemed medically necessary by their health care providers. **It completely interferes with and strips away parents' rights** to make the best decisions about their children's health care in partnership with physicians and counselors.

How dare this Legislature presume to tell me that I have no right to do what is best for my children – particularly when the majority seems so concerned about protecting parents' rights? Why does Representative Click and the 39 co-sponsors of HB68 think that state Legislators somehow know better than I do what is best for my children? And why do they think that denying healthcare to one specific group of children is OK? **All Ohio children deserve the right to medically necessary care without government interference and overreach.** In fact, federal law mandates it (1).

As a parent, my greatest fear for my children is the risk of suicide if they cannot receive the medically necessary healthcare they require to survive and thrive. HB 68 would deny my children that care, putting them at greater risk of suicide.

My second greatest fear for my children is the risk of harm from others who want to attack them out of hate simply for who they are. HB 68 represents just that: it is nothing more than bullying and state-sponsored abuse. **As a mother, I am incredulous that the Ohio Legislature would intentionally putting my children's lives at risk with this dangerous bill.**

**Let's be clear what HB 68 is really about:** This is not about protecting parents' rights, or you wouldn't be trampling on my rights as a parent. This is not about protecting children, or you would care more about the harm this bill would do and is currently doing to transgender youth.

**This bill is part of the larger effort to eradicate transgender people out of existence.** Michael Knowles of *The Daily Wire* said the quiet part out loud at this year's CPAC (Conservative Political Action Conference) in March: He said, "...for the good of society...transgenderism must be eradicated from public life entirely. There can be no middle way in dealing with transgenderism. It is all or nothing" (2).

According to a March 2023 report titled "Under Fire: The War on LGBTQ People in America" by the Movement Advancement Project, **over 650** anti-LGBTQ bills have been introduced in 46 states **this year** alone – many of them targeting transgender people specifically (3). HB 68 is just one of many such attacks here in the Ohio Legislature.

As the number of legislative attacks on transgender people has increased, we have seen a corresponding increase in **extreme transphobia being stoked and weaponized, instilling real fear of violence** among transgender folks and we families who love them. These dangers include:

- The hate crime mass shooting at Club Q in Colorado Springs last November – on Transgender Day of Remembrance
- At least 35 trans & non-binary Americans murdered in 2023 as of this year’s Transgender Day of Remembrance (on Nov. 20)
- Multiple drag shows across Ohio interrupted by armed Nazis and domestic terrorists threatening violence (4,5,6,7)
- Libs of TikTok inciting bomb threats against children’s hospitals that provide gender affirming care, including here in Ohio at Akron Children’s Hospital (8)
- Kiwi Farms doxxing and swatting transgender people, putting their lives at risk (9)
- People in our own community who have been doxxed and stalked simply for testifying against these hateful anti-trans bills
- The Ohio state Board of Education passing a resolution last fall that denies anti-discrimination protections for LGBTQ+ students, putting them at great risk for bullying and harassment at school (10)
- Outside agitators and national hate groups suing our local school boards and threatening physical violence against LGBTQ+ students (11,12,13)
- And extremist legislators, backed by hate groups such as Alliance Defending Freedom and the Center for Christina Virtue (14), pushing hundreds of hateful anti-trans bills across the country – sending the constant message that transgender people do not have a right to exist in American society. **Already, Florida has become so dangerous for transgender people that it has been put on a “DO NOT TRAVEL” alert (15). Will Ohio be next?**

I say it is time to **STOP this madness**. Stop harassing children. Stop threatening medical providers and hospitals. Stop denying parents the right and the freedom to make medical decisions for our kids.

Let’s not make Ohio’s laws so dangerous and draconian that our young people can’t wait to leave the state and families like mine are forced to leave for our own safety and so our kids can get the medical care they need. Ohio’s economy already ranks low at 37<sup>th</sup> in the country (16), and it will only get worse as businesses will not be able to recruit talented and skilled employees.

Regarding the transgender athlete ban portion of the bill – this is a solution in search of a problem that does not exist. In Ohio, the Ohio High School Athletic Association and the NCAA already have strict policies in place that transgender women and girls must meet before they can be approved to participate on women’s and girls’ sports teams, and those conditions must be re-evaluated annually, ensuring transgender women do not possess a competitive advantage over cisgender female athletes. This system is working well – there is no need for the Legislature to intervene.

The U.S. Supreme Court has already determined that transgender athletes cannot be discriminated against in school sports (17), so this is a futile exercise and a waste of taxpayer dollars to push a blatantly unconstitutional bill.

At the end of the day, we need to acknowledge what HB68 is really about: whether transgender people should be treated fairly across all areas of life—or whether they can be unfairly kicked out of a restaurant, denied an apartment, denied the health care they need, and denied the opportunity to play team sports like all other kids - just because of who they are.

I urge you to reject discrimination and instead stand up for recognizing that all people – regardless of their identities – are entitled to human and civil rights in all areas of life. I urge you to vote no on HB68.

Sincerely,

Laura Robertson-Boyd

**Footnotes:**

1. Clarke, Kristen. “Justice Department Reinforces Federal Nondiscrimination Obligations in Letter to State Officials Regarding Transgender Youth.” *U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division*, Mar. 31, 2022. [www.justice.gov/opa/press-release/file/1489066/download](http://www.justice.gov/opa/press-release/file/1489066/download).
2. Zoledziowski, Anya. “CPAC Speaker Calls for Eradication of ‘transgenderism,’ Crowd Goes Wild.” *VICE*, Mar. 6, 2023. [www.vice.com/en/article/bvjgnq/cpac-transgenderism-speaker-called-for-eradication](http://www.vice.com/en/article/bvjgnq/cpac-transgenderism-speaker-called-for-eradication).
3. Miller, Susan. “‘War’ on LGBTQ Existence: 8 Ways the Record Onslaught of 650 Bills Targets the Community.” *USA Today*, Apr. 5, 2023. [www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2023/03/31/650-anti-lgbtq-bills-introduced-us/11552357002/](http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2023/03/31/650-anti-lgbtq-bills-introduced-us/11552357002/).
4. Romero, Dennis. “‘Holi-Drag Storytime’ for Children Canceled Because of Right-Wing Protesters.” *NBCNews.Com*, Dec. 4, 2022. [www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/holi-drag-storytime-children-canceled-right-wing-protesters-rcna59990](http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/holi-drag-storytime-children-canceled-right-wing-protesters-rcna59990).
5. Comeriato, H.L. “Armed Nazis, White Supremacists Swarm LGBTQ+ Drag Event in Wadsworth, Ohio.” *The Buckeye Flame*, Mar. 15, 2023. [www.thebuckeyeflame.com/2023/03/15/armed-nazis-white-supremacists-swarm-lgbtq-drag-event/](http://www.thebuckeyeflame.com/2023/03/15/armed-nazis-white-supremacists-swarm-lgbtq-drag-event/).
6. Wong, Julia Carrie. “Drag Queen Story Hour Goes on despite Neo-Nazi’s Attempt to Burn Church Down.” *The Guardian*, Apr. 3, 2023. [www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/apr/03/drag-queen-story-hour-chesterland-community-church](http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/apr/03/drag-queen-story-hour-chesterland-community-church).
7. Wiggins, Christopher. “Armed Ohio Neo-Nazis Waving Swastika Flags Target Drag Event Again.” *Advocate.Com*, May 2, 2023. [www.advocate.com/news/ohio-neo-nazi-drag-brunch](http://www.advocate.com/news/ohio-neo-nazi-drag-brunch).
8. Lin-Fisher, Betty. “Akron Children’s Hospital the Latest Target of Social Media Attacks on Transgender Care.” *Akron Beacon Journal*, Sept. 22, 2022. [www.beaconjournal.com/story/news/local/2022/09/22/social-media-attack-targets-akron-childrens-hospital-transgender-program-gender-affirming/69511217007/](http://www.beaconjournal.com/story/news/local/2022/09/22/social-media-attack-targets-akron-childrens-hospital-transgender-program-gender-affirming/69511217007/).
9. Collins, Ben, and Kat Tenbarge. “Behind the Notorious Anti-Trans Message Board Blocked for Causing an ‘Emergency Threat to Human Life.’” *NBCNews.Com*, Sept. 2, 2022. [www.nbcnews.com/tech/internet/cloudflare-kiwi-farms-keffals-anti-trans-rcna44834](http://www.nbcnews.com/tech/internet/cloudflare-kiwi-farms-keffals-anti-trans-rcna44834).
10. Rees, David, and Karina Cheung. “Ohio Board of Education Approves Anti-LGBTQ+ Resolution.” *NBC4 WCMH-TV*, Dec. 15, 2022. [www.nbc4i.com/news/local-news/columbus/ohio-board-of-education-approves-anti-lgbtq-resolution/](http://www.nbc4i.com/news/local-news/columbus/ohio-board-of-education-approves-anti-lgbtq-resolution/).

11. Rees, David. "LGBTQ+ Inclusion in Ohio Schools: Students Targeted after Prom Crowning, Anti-Harassment Policies Removed." *NBC4 WCMH-TV*, May 9, 2023. [www.nbc4i.com/news/local-news/lgbtq-inclusion-in-ohio-schools-students-targeted-after-prom-crowning-anti-harassment-policies-removed/](http://www.nbc4i.com/news/local-news/lgbtq-inclusion-in-ohio-schools-students-targeted-after-prom-crowning-anti-harassment-policies-removed/).
12. Rees, David, and Karina Cheung. "Parents Suing Hilliard Schools for 'indoctrination,' LGBTQ+ Inclusion." *NBC4 WCMH-TV*, Jan. 18, 2023. [www.nbc4i.com/news/local-news/hilliard/parents-suing-hilliard-schools-for-indoctrination-lgbtq-inclusion/](http://www.nbc4i.com/news/local-news/hilliard/parents-suing-hilliard-schools-for-indoctrination-lgbtq-inclusion/).
13. Rees, David. "Olentangy Schools Sued over Anti-Harassment Policies for LGBTQ+ Students." *NBC4 WCMH-TV*, May 13, 2023. [www.nbc4i.com/news/local-news/columbus/olentangy-local-school-district-sued-over-anti-harassment-policies-for-lgbtq-students/](http://www.nbc4i.com/news/local-news/columbus/olentangy-local-school-district-sued-over-anti-harassment-policies-for-lgbtq-students/).
14. Turan, Eliana. "How Cleveland Became an Epicenter of Anti-Trans Violence: Part II, Hate Groups." *The Buckeye Flame*, Feb. 7, 2023. [www.thebuckeyeflame.com/2022/06/28/how-cleveland-became-an-epicenter-of-anti-trans-violence-part-ii-hate-groups/](http://www.thebuckeyeflame.com/2022/06/28/how-cleveland-became-an-epicenter-of-anti-trans-violence-part-ii-hate-groups/).
15. Schneider, Mike. "Civil Rights Groups Issue Travel Advisories for Florida, Warning Tourists of 'hostile' Laws." *PBS*, May 21, 2023. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/civil-rights-groups-issue-travel-advisories-for-florida-warning-tourists-of-hostile-laws>.
16. US News. "Ohio Rankings | US News Best States." *US News & World Report*, 2023. [www.usnews.com/news/best-states/ohio](http://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/ohio).
17. Chung, Andrew. "U.S. Supreme Court declines to allow West Virginia transgender athlete ban." *Reuters*, April 6, 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/legal/us-supreme-court-declines-allow-west-virginia-transgender-athlete-ban-2023-04-06/>