

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HOUSE BILL 68 – “Saving Adolescents from Experimentation (SAFE) Act” and “Save Women’s Sports Act.”

To Chairwoman Roegner, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Government Oversight Committee, I am writing today in fierce opposition to HB68.

My name is Sonny, and I am a gay transgender man living in Cincinnati. At the time this hearing is scheduled I will be at the Hoxworth Center donating blood, so forgive me for not appearing in person. The Red Cross, acting on best medical practices from the FDA, have updated their donation policies so that gay men can finally give blood. They, unlike this bill’s primary sponsor Gary Click, believe in science, doctors, and the human right of self-determination when it comes to medical autonomy.

I previously submitted opposition testimony to the House committee hearing on June 14<sup>th</sup> of this year. I was curious about the full number of testimonies, so I went back today and counted. So far there are only 44 proponents that have submitted testimony in favor of this bill. In contrast, 471 – *nearly eleven times the number* – have written to the House, and now to you, to say: **stop!**

Despite all of us crying out to defend transgender people, this hateful legislation passed the House and has now come to your doorstep as a Frankenstein’s monster, an omnibus bill that would not only pull transgender youth off of their life-saving medications but also bar trans girls – up to college level! – from playing on teams which match their gender identity. Surely college students can handle the idea of playing sports alongside a trans woman. If they aren’t learning empathy and acceptance in their time at school, then frankly they aren’t getting their money’s worth.

Speaking from my own experience, I knew that I was transgender from a very young age. I didn’t have the words for it until college, when I finally realized that the way I felt was something other people experienced too. I came out socially at first, and began the long, harrowing process of finding a therapist who would, after a year, be able to write letters of recommendation for hormones and surgery. I fought with my insurance to cover it. They refused, so I paid thousands of dollars out of my own pocket – my life’s savings, but worth every penny. It was a process that ultimately took three years. Nobody is walking into a doctor’s office, holding out their hand, and getting a prescription for hormones – especially not children. These medical decisions are made by experts with years and years of training, alongside therapists and parents who understand their own children better than any committee can.

Proponents of this bill claim to support “parents’ rights,” but it’s clear that they only support the rights of a select few parents: the ones who want to stop their children from transitioning. This attitude explicitly harms trans kids. They don’t stop being trans when denied healthcare. Sometimes they go back into the closet, bide their time, and if they’re lucky, get out from under their parents’ thumb when they turn 18. A lot of times they kill themselves instead, or are murdered, as in the recent case of Brianna Ghey.

You will hear today from medical experts, social workers, teachers, parents, and trans children themselves – do your civic duty and listen to them, believe them, and stop this legislation from becoming the law of the land in our beautiful state. It’s frankly embarrassing that we’ve been pulled into a debate over the human rights of people who just want to go to the doctor and play sports without getting bullied by their own government. I urge you to vote **NO** on this shameful bill.

Sincerely, Sonny Calzaretta