

HB 68 Testimony
Ohio Senate Government Oversight Committee
December 6, 2023

Submitted to Chair Roegner
Roegner@ohiosenate.gov

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Hudson,

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak with you today about HB 68. My name is Jeanne Ogden and I am a wife, a mom of three daughters, a Civil Engineer by training, and a writer.

On a sunny spring day eight years ago, my beautiful child bounced into the kitchen, shrugged out of her backpack and threw it on the table. At the time, all my daughter could think about was robots and how to make people laugh. Her energy and intensity overflowed.

But on this particular day, there was a quiet, reserved, watchful vibe wafting off her. She gave me a hug damp with at the time was “boy sweat” and said Mom... a pause... I need to tell you something.

I said, okay? I could feel the fear in her tone, see it in her body language.

“I’m trans.”

I paused.

Then I said, “Cam, I love you. I will always love you no matter what. We will figure this thing out together.”

The tense look on her face lifted. Her face brightened and she threw her arms around me. “You’re the best mom in the world,” she said, then grabbed her bag and jogged up the stairs.

I was terrified. My pulse pounded. My palms sweat.

Trans? What did that mean?

My beautiful child.

Cam and I and our family had weathered some family health challenges. I wanted her to be okay. But I was afraid. I am a self-proclaimed liberal. I supported the LGBTQ community – in words. But my mind immediately leapt to the threat of surgery. To my child wishing to change her body.

How could my beautiful child not love herself as she was. I understood trans people existed—just not my child. I was sure something else was going on, something we could fix..

I went online and found articles spewing misinformation about social contagion, high rates of regret, clinics pushing treatments and ideologies that would make her trans if she wasn't already.

I convinced myself that being trans, that *transitioning*, was the worst possible outcome. Testimony presented to you, facts I know now, don't support that assessment.

But at the time, I believed it all.

As Cam and I talked more about her feelings, we did visit the doctor. She had known Cam for years. Cam's counselor had known her for years. They recommended we take her to a gender clinic to have her evaluated.

I said no. I said "no" to the visit. I said "no" to gender affirming care. And my child suffered.

Over the next few years, I watched her depression and anxiety worsen. There are permanent wounds. There were other symptoms, but those are part of her story, not mine.

We treated her depression. We treated her ADHD. We spend time together as a family, went to church, but her gender identity remained female.

By the time she was twenty, she pursued gender affirming care on her own and I was devastated.

I had been wrong and I'd let my daughter walk through her journey alone.

I didn't need Gary Click to interpret the studies for me. I didn't need the Center for Christian Virtue to usurp my parental rights. I believed the lies and my daughter suffered.

It took a long time for Cam and I to regain the trust that we now cherish.

I admitted I was wrong.

I told her it had been my issue, not hers.

And then I started asking questions—and *listening*.

We are closer now than we have ever been and I don't want another parent to have their choice taken away from them.

I urge you to learn from my mistakes. Don't fall for the same misinformation I was. Vote no on HB 68.

