

Opponent Testimony for HB68
Senate Government Oversight Committee
12/5/23

Emery Lu, Medical Student

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Emery Lu, they/them and I am a proud and out transgender medical student in the state of Ohio. I am writing today to strongly oppose HB68.

As a transgender medical student, I have seen both the patient and the provider sides of gender-affirming care and the strong positive impact that gender-affirming care provides to the lives of transgender people. Transitioning is not an easy feat. It involves facing family rejection, societal rejection, social and community rejection just to simply express and live our most authentic lives. Accessing healthcare means facing potentially naïve doctors who turn you away or pass you around doctor after doctor until you find someone that will help you. Above all else, feelings of gender dysphoria and the stress of existing in a world that seeks to erase you pushes many transgender people, especially minors, into severe depression and even suicide. I felt that way for many years when I was transitioning, but being able to see doctors and therapists and connect with peers helped me slowly but surely reach a place where I felt confident in myself and my identity and confident to face a hostile world.

Gender-affirming care saves lives. We have seen study after study that supports this. Revoking this care will without a doubt lead to death by suicide in many young transgender people in the state of Ohio. Additionally, this bill greatly oversteps the doctor-patient relationship, the confidentiality that comes with that, and the laws we spent so many years enacting to protect patient rights and patient privacy. These doctors are experts in their field and follow standards of care that are supported by every major American pediatric medical society. Passing this bill refutes evidence-base medical practice and turns medicine to the hands of the government rather than those who actually practice medicine.

As such, I strongly urge you to not pass HB68. It puts the lives of transgender youth across the state in peril and will drive families out of the state of Ohio. Being able to access high-quality gender-affirming care in today's society is a blessing and a gift that we do not take for granted. I urge you to not take this gift away.