

The purpose of this written testimony is to convey my strong opposition to House Bill 68. I am transgender Ohioan having been born in this state and lived here for over 35 years. I would like to first discuss my own personal transition from the perspective of my faith. I have known since I was a young child that my ascribed sex did not match my internal deeply held sense of self. I first used the word transgender to describe myself at the age of 19 more than twenty years ago. I view my medical transition as a profound act of faith after a period of discernment in which I consulted no less than clergy, psychologists, doctors, nurses, pharmacists, lawyers, friends, and family. In undertaking my transition journey, I am doing what my God, in her infinite wisdom has commanded me to do. Just as Saul was called on the road to Damascus after hearing the voice of God that which one once was, one no longer has to be.

As for the science, Gender affirming care saves lives including my own. This bill is out of step with the opinions of more than two dozen of the nation's leading medical organizations including the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, American Academy of Dermatology, American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Nursing, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Physician Assistants, American College Health Association, American College of Nurse-Midwives, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American College of Physicians, American Counseling Association, American Heart Association, American Medical Association, American Medical Student Association, American Nurses Association, American Osteopathic Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Psychological Association, American Public Health Association, American Society of Plastic Surgeons, Endocrine Society, and the Federation of Pediatric Organizations all of which believe that gender affirming care is an appropriate treatment for gender dysphoria. More personally, I was a transgender child who would have benefited immensely from gender affirming care at a much earlier age than I received it. It would have saved me an adolescence and early adulthood that was filled with much more psychological and medical distress than was necessary to my lack of access to care. While a teenager, I was diagnosed with idiopathic scoliosis, severe curvature of the spine with no known cause. While I would not have died without treatment, my life would severely be impacted. No one would argue that because scoliosis is idiopathic, that it is not real and that my parents should have waited to treat it even though the treatment (titanium rods) is dangerous. Gender dysphoria, while it also is idiopathic, is no less real and its treatment is much less dangerous.

By removing access to care to minors, it will have a deleterious effect on their physical and mental health. I cannot imagine what the effect of care being withdrawn from me would be given the range of physical and mental health benefits that it has conferred. Passage of this bill would likely result in the uprooting of children and families from this state as they make the journey to access care that they have deemed appropriate in consultation with medical and mental health professionals. Lastly the sports provision of this bill is completely unnecessary for this state, with fewer than a half dozen transgender athletes having undergone the rigorous process in which competing in their chosen division. This bill will place targets on the back of the gender non-conforming youth all over the state regardless of their gender assigned at birth.

Respectfully submitted,

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