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Opposing Testimony: Written

Submitted To: Ohio House Finance Committee

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Chairman Stewart and fellow committee members,

I have become aware that last week several Republican members chose to include some anti-LGBTQ+ language within H.B. 96 Budget Bill. Specifically, under the Health and Human Services section, they want to add language defining that there are only two sexes. Additionally, under the General Government section, republicans want to require public libraries to hide material related to gender identity from minors.

I ask you, are these statements in any way related to your committee specialization of finance? Do they belong anywhere in a state budget bill? The answer is a resounding NO. These statements have nothing to do with creating the state budget and I implore you to strike them down. These statements are a fear-based and hateful attack on transgender people in this state. While transgender people are the minority, they are still your constituents and deserve legislative representation and consideration.

When I was a young kid growing up in rural Ohio, running around with scraped knees and climbing trees, I didn't think much about banned books in the library or transgender ideology. I was just trying to experience the joy of each day, embracing the beauty of youth and nature. I didn't have any hate in my heart for others. Hate is learned. I didn't have any plans in my heart for excluding others. Exclusion is learned. I was merely pursuing happiness each day.

Let's all return to that childlike state in our hearts, the carefree happiness of youth, and reflect on that joy. There was no plan in our hearts to bully others and steal their books. There was no plan in our hearts to exclude others who were different than ourselves. All of these concepts were learned as we grew up, shaped by society, by religion, by education, by politics and by experience. You have learned to fear transgender people who are different than you. You have learned to exclude them by erasing their right to exist. I ask you to ask yourselves, what would your childhood-self think about your actions today?

Transgender people are just trying to live their lives as their authentic selves and pursue happiness, just like you. Please stop your unnecessary attack on their existence. They may

be the minority, but they are also your constituents and people whom you have the chance to protect. You have the chance to change the narrative today and instead embrace forgiveness. Release this hatred and fear of people who don't fit in your narrative, people who don't fit in the white, religious mold. Please take two minutes to reflect on yourselves, remember that childhood joy and take some time to embrace healing and release the dark hatred of others. I hope you will. I ask you to remove the language that there are only two sexes from H.B 96. I ask you to remove the language that books with transgender ideology must be hidden in public libraries, away from children.

Thank you for your time,

Anna Goure

-A concerned citizen.