

I am a transgender resident of the greater Cleveland area. I transitioned more than a decade ago, and changed my identity then as well. To this date I have not broken any laws, or impacted the world in any way that would require my entire identity to be redefined in a budget bill.

I frankly feel insulted that our representatives are wasting time trying to restrict the lives and freedoms of trans and non-binary individuals in the state's budget discussions. My identity, and the freedoms of those like me have nothing to do with the state's budget.

If this motion continues on in such a way then I will need to fully consider my relocation to a more amenable state that actually respects my rights. I pay my taxes, I buy local, and I vote. Why should I worry about my freedoms being restricted when I'm not a criminal?

I have lived in this state my entire life. I am employed full-time as a cybersecurity specialist. I have been around the country and seen many people from many walks of life. Why should my identity, that I have lived with for nearly half of my life, be arbitrarily redefined and criminalized in a budget decision?

I ask our representatives to look closely at the priorities of our state, and our people. Does the state budget require that we stamp on the first amendment rights of the people within this great state? What does it accomplish to do this? How does this balance our state's budget?

For what reason should I continue to reside in, and pay taxes to a state that doesn't respect my most fundamental self expression?