

Chairman Cirino, Vice Chairman Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Ohio Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Elizabeth Snyder; I'm a lifelong Ohioan currently living in Columbus, and I'm writing to oppose the current version of H.B. 96, specifically regarding using it as a vessel to define legal sex as "biological sex" and how that impacts Ohioans, cisgender and transgender alike. This move not only puts transgender and intersex Ohioans at greater risk of discrimination, it also subjects cisgender Ohioans to scrutiny surrounding their sex assigned at birth and portends losses for the state's economy.

This conflation of legal and biological sex will cause transgender Ohioans to bear a sex marker on their driver's licenses that generally does not match their appearance and/or gender expression which in turn causes them to be outed as transgender in situations where this is likely to be met with discrimination and harassment. Such cases include but are not limited to presenting ID at a bar or grocery store, to a potential landlord (resulting in increased risk for housing discrimination), and to potential employers (where the risk for employment discrimination is increased). This increased risk for harassment and discrimination also extends to cisgender Ohioans, some of whom may be assumed to be transgender and asked to "prove" their "biological sex" in any number of invasive ways. This risk to cisgender people, primarily women, has been seen at the national level in bathrooms and at sporting events, where women, often those who don't meet an unwritten standard of femininity, are assumed transgender and subsequently harassed.

This attempt to legislate biology reminds me of the notorious effort by a 19th century Indiana Assembly to define the mathematical constant pi as exactly 3.2 rather than the 3.14159... we know it as today. Both instances aim to simplify a complex concept without regard for real-world applications. Human sex characteristics cannot be reduced to a male-female binary; a non-insignificant segment of the population possesses male and female characteristics, often due to differences in sex development (DSD). Similarly, "biological sex" is generally accepted as a combination of many more specific sex characteristics including hormonal, chromosomal, reproductive, and secondary sex characteristics rather than being identical to that which was assigned at birth. In addition to the above DSD cases, transgender people change many of the components of "biological sex" through medical intervention and thus change it overall, rendering the narrow definition of "biological sex" impractical.

This language has the potential to dampen or outright harm Ohio's economy. Transgender people and their loved ones will be less likely to attend higher-education institutions like The Ohio State University or the University of Cincinnati (my alma mater—go 'Cats), seek employment elsewhere, avoid sporting events or concerts in the state, and so on. It may also cause large businesses to avoid investing here or impact the bottom lines of small businesses. Efforts to roll back DEI initiatives at companies like Target have been met with noticeable boycotts; this language and its associated effects would likely garner a similar response.

I urge the Finance Committee and the Senate at large to remove this unnecessary provision from the budget; it protects no one and hurts all of us.

Thank you,  
Elizabeth