

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the Senate Health Committee: thank you for the time and the opportunity to give this testimony.

My name is Leah. I'm a lifelong resident of Ohio, and I am also a transgender woman. I come today to speak in opposition to harmful provisions contained within HB96. I love this state. My entire life is here, and if these provisions are allowed into the budget bill, it will make life a lot harder for people like me. They feel like an attempt to push people in my community out of the state.

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This section contains a provision that is essentially a mirror copy of a federal executive order, defining sex. This executive order has been widely criticized by many. Anyone with an understanding of biology knows that the wording and definitions contained within it are essentially nonsense. They don't provide a workable framework for the definition of the sexes and therefore it fails at a fundamental level to be useful, or even workable.

This executive order also ignores a variety of diverse individuals, such as intersex people. Intersex people don't neatly fit into a category of male or female. They can have chromosomal, anatomical or developmental differences that vary from what is traditionally thought of as "male or female". The reality of sex and biology is more complicated than a simple binary.

The adaptation of this executive order would be essentially a virtue signal. One that says that my day to day reality is wrong, and that people like me don't belong in Ohio.

#### Page 4670

There is one more provision that I would like to spend some time on. This is found on page 4670. This provision allocates money to be spent on

projects that provide shelter to unhoused youth. This, by itself, is a wonderful thing. I think we all agree that youth should be protected and should not be forced onto the streets. That's why I find it so concerning that immediately after stating the allocation of funds, there is another statement saying that these funds will be withheld entirely from shelters that "promote or affirm social gender transition". This does not refer to gender affirming medical care. This refers to using a person's correct pronouns, or using their correct name.

This means that shelters have a choice. They can reject trans youth from their shelters, which would force kids with no home to go onto the streets. The other option is to accept trans youth, and for that reason alone, according to this bill, lose funding and risk losing vital services for many youth, not just ones in my community.

I want to stress how this section goes out of it's way to make a clause specifically targeting a minority group. Imagine if instead of targeting trans youth, it was written to target racial minorities or religious minorities. I don't think anyone on the council would argue that would be admissible. So, I pose the question, why is it acceptable to target my minority community?

In closing, I want to say this. Ohio has signs all over that say "Ohio welcomes you". If the budget bill goes through as is, that would make these signs a lie for people like me. It would send a signal that people in my community who live here, have family here, work here, and love here, are not welcome.

I urge you all to reconsider these provisions. This bill should be one that betters Ohio for all it's residents. I urge you all to revise or amend these sections to make that a reality.

Thank you for your time.