



Trans Unity Coalition

House Bill 96 Testimony to the Senate Medicaid Committee, May 6 2025

Bree Taylor, Founder & Executive Director

Chairman Romanchuk, Vice Chairman Huffman, Ranking Member Liston, and Members Ingram, Johnson, and Wilson of the Senate Medicaid Committee, I appreciate this opportunity to publicly testify and share my comment.

My name is Bree Taylor, I am blessed by she/her pronouns, and I founded and serve as executive director to the transgender advocacy non-profit Trans Unity Coalition.

Over the past month, our team has been providing awareness to several of the provisions contained in House Bill 96. We have often heard that many are not even aware that these provisions exist, which unfortunately includes both members of the public as well as our lawmakers. As a 4,063 page bill, one amended with an additional 1,018 page omnibus with under 24 hours of committee life and House passage under 72 hours, it is wholly understandable that many impactful, dangerous components could be snuck in through just a handful of sentences among the many pages and go unnoticed, such as one I am about to mention today. With no practical time for the public to voice concern, it calls to question the acting leadership, not a question of success, but one of transparency and loyalty to the public. But that was the House. And this is the Senate.

Line Items **134312 through 134318**, defining Section 333.13, refer to **complete Medicaid cuts for the mental health needs of those receiving gender affirming mental health treatment**. Keyword being affirming, because forced detransition and conversion therapy are not acceptable substitutions, and do more damage to vulnerable people who are neither deserving of this nor aided by it. Given that the transgender community of Ohio faces nearly double the poverty rate compared to cisgender Ohioans of poverty, these funds are often imperative to necessary mental health treatment for those with no out-of-pocket alternative.

And it is effective. Gender affirming mental health services significantly reduce symptoms of **depression and anxiety**, comorbidity of **substance abuse**, and improves overall **quality of life**.

It prevents suicide. It keeps people alive. There is no more noble a goal for mental health service than this.

In my role, I am blessed to have met with and spoken to thousands of transgender community members across the country. That sense of community is worth fighting for and worth preserving. 230,000 members of Ohio alone. It is for this reason that enacting additional loss of life is one that I can neither stand nor see justified. It is perverse, morally unconscionable, and defies the very teachings of Jesus Christ to love thy neighbor.

On behalf of myself and the many who did not feel safe to send testimony, please, we implore you to remove this and all other harmful provisions which will hurt Ohio's transgender community. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Bree Taylor; May 4, 2025