

**Senate Medicaid Committee**  
**Testimony on HB 96, May 6 2025**  
**Raven Tadlock**

Chairman Romanchuk, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the Senate Medicaid Committee: thank you for the opportunity to testify in front of you

I'm here today as an 18-year-old representing my LGBTQ+ community. I'm asking you, our elected officials, to take what I say seriously—because lives are at stake.

I volunteered at Grove City Pride Festival in October 2024. I set up our youth table, where kids were invited to paint pumpkins. Shortly after the event started, armed and masked members of a national Nazi hate group, called “The Blood Tribe,” showed up at our downtown park. They didn’t stand at a distance. Instead, they planted themselves right next to the youth table, where I was helping multiple children paint pumpkins. I remember having to push down my own fear and direct these children to a safer place.

This hate group clearly came to intimidate and threaten peaceful people. I felt shocked that something like this could happen in my town, all for such an innocent event. I’ll never forget the sadness I felt that day for our residents, especially our children.

When this happened, it was my community that literally stepped in and stood in front of this hate group, shielding us. I am now asking you to step in, just as these brave citizens had on that day.

In January of this year, the President issued an executive order declaring only two sexes: male and female—erasing the existence of intersex and transgender people, people like me. But I exist. I have a life. I am going to college and I will achieve great things. But because I am transgender, the government sees me as something to be erased. I never imagined that my government would deny my presence.

And now, Ohio is copying that language—word for word—in our state budget. If left unchanged, it will become law here as well. This is not just harmful— it’s dangerous. For example, there was a 33% increase in activity at national suicide and crisis hotlines around the time of President Trump's executive order declaring male and female to be the only two sexes. This surge in calls was particularly pronounced among LGBTQ+ youth, who expressed heightened anxiety and fear

in response to the policy. This clearly illustrates the impact of policy changes on the mental health and well-being of vulnerable populations.

Prominent medical organizations—including the American Medical Association, American Psychological Association, Doctors for America, and the Endocrine Society—have condemned these policies. They call them scientifically inaccurate, medically harmful, and discriminatory. These actions don't reflect science—they reflect politics. Even if you don't agree with this information, you should be aware that people are getting hurt.

An additional provision would block Medicaid funding for any mental health services that “promote or affirm social gender transition.” This contradicts the standards of care endorsed by every major medical association, including the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Psychiatric Association.

These policies were buried in a budget—hidden, quietly, and cowardly. That is a failure of leadership. And I am asking you not to fail us the way our state and national leaders have.

**I am asking you to please remove these blatantly discriminatory provisions from the budget. If this doesn't happen, more Ohioans from an already at-risk group will die as a result.**

I hope this testimony has moved you to act. We are living through dangerous times. But you—our elected officials —have the power and influence to make a change for the better. Use it to show you care. Use it to protect all of your residents. Use it to lead.

Thank you.