

## IN-PERSON TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO H.B 68

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in opposition to House Bill 68. I am the Reverend Mark Anthony, and I am the pastor at St. John's United Church of Christ in Germantown, Ohio. I speak today as a parent, a pastor, and a citizen.

I am the parent of a transwoman. I have watched her progress through this journey and readily admit that there were concerns in the beginning. So, I and her mother did two things. First, we listened to her and we chose to trust that the experience she described was real. It may well be that we cannot grasp it fully, but that does not make it untrue. Second, we listened to her medical providers and trusted them. At every instance, they were cautious, methodical, and professional. I note that you have named this bill the "Saving Adolescents from Experimentation" Act – clever, but, at best, misguided and, at worst, defamatory. Nothing in the medical care of our daughter was experimental. It was medical care of the highest caliber.

I am a Christian pastor. I understand from news reports that when proponents of this bill testified before this committee, some invoked their understanding of the Christian faith in support of their position. Such is their right. But it is important for you to understand that they do not speak for all Christians. There is a vast range of interpretation of Scriptures related to human sexuality, and strikingly different theologies related to what God might think about the issues raised by this legislation. Just because someone claims to have a divine answer to the questions at hand does not mean that they do. Just because someone claims to speak for Christianity does not mean they do.

For some, including myself, it is precisely my faith that requires me to stand against this legislation. I adamantly believe that trans people are dearly-loved children of God, not in spite of being trans, not as gullible dupes, not as someone who needs to be saved from this particular “disorder”, but as they are. As they know themselves to be, in the depths of their souls. You may well choose to vote for this bill supported at least in part by your religious convictions, but you, and the public, must be reminded that others, who claim the same Lord and the same faith, deeply disagree.

I am a citizen. I expect that this General Assembly will exercise its authority fairly, judiciously, and without malice. You exist to protect and further the Common Good. You have a special responsibility to those who are most vulnerable. When you use your authority to prevent parents and their children, in consultation with trusted medical providers, from obtaining medical care that they have determined is to the benefit of those children, simply in order to promote the agenda of the privileged few or of a particular religious belief, to score political points, or just because you do not understand, and do not want to understand, something that is unfamiliar or confusing, you abuse the trust placed in you.

Trust the parents of children who identify as trans. Do not usurp the authority of those people who know these children best simply because you have the votes to do so. Trust the medical professionals who are experts in these matters. Do not usurp the expertise of doctors, therapists, and counselors who follow the science. There is overwhelming medical evidence that there are proper treatments in such cases that make the transitioning process for youth a safer, healthier, and positive one. You may not like the idea of transgenderism but that is not a reason to outlaw it

Please step back from this bill. It, quite literally, serves no good purpose.