

Opponent Testimony for House Bill 68

Public Health Policy Committee

5/24/2023

Alexander Faria

Chairman Lipps, Representative Click, and members of the Public Health Policy Committee,

My name is Alexander Faria. I am a father, a husband, a voter, and an Ohio resident. I have three children and this bill affects my entire family. It is none of your business how my children identify.

This bill brings the government into my doctor's office, the exam room with my children and the private conversations of therapists and their patients. Finding mental healthcare for kids is already difficult enough with insurance issues and the current lack of available professionals. We are very fortunate in Ohio to have Children's Hospital as a provider. Children Hospitals Thrive program is the top program in the country for Gender affirming care.

It is clear that no one from that program was consulted in the writing of this bill. Section 2 A has been demonstrated to be untrue. Section 2 B, D, F, G, H, K, N, and O are all false statements. Sections 2 C and E are not only false but the opposite is true. I is grossly misleading, and M does not refer to minors and is also misleading.

Medical professionals did not write this bill. This bill was not written in Ohio, by an Ohioan or for the people of Ohio. This bill was written by an out-of-state special interest coalition and handed out to state representatives all over the country to implement in their own states. You can see this in the language of all the nearly identical bills around the country.

I could refer you to hundreds of studies and mountains of evidence that show gender-affirming care is not only healthy but necessary. I could tell you that gender-affirming care saves lives. I could point out that this is government overreach and appeal to your better natures. I am not sure that is worth my time.

Instead, I will speak in a language you may understand. If this bill passes Ohio will suffer economically. Estimates put the number of Ohioans who identify as trans at around 10,000 people. Any parents with trans children will need to consider if they have the means to move out of the state. Those who can, may choose to move. They will take their families, businesses patronage, and money elsewhere.

When people have to relocate, they will not come to Ohio. Businesses will not come to Ohio if their employees and their families do not have the right to make their own healthcare decisions.

If this bill passes I will be moving my family out of state. I have many friends who will be moving their families out of state as well.

I know I am privileged to be able to move if I must and for that I am grateful. My heart breaks for those who do not have the means to relocate. Families and children will suffer. This bill claims to want to keep children safe but suicide is one of the leading causes of death among children, and suicide rates among trans teens who do not receive gender-affirming care are particularly high.

I demand that you throw out this bill in its entirety. This bill needs to be trashed and never revisited. It is filled with dangerous lies and it is only aimed to harm and control Ohio family's personal medical decisions.

This is not the only bill put forward recently that harms Ohio families and gives nothing in return. They do not protect us, they aim to control us. If you continue to pass these bills the people of Ohio will turn to you when they are hurt and they will hold you responsible. You are taking away their choices, their freedoms, and in some cases their children. If you take away someone's child and they have nothing else to lose and they blame you for that, I pray to the gods that on that day your children are safe.