

**Opponent Testimony for House Bill 68
House Public Health Policy Committee
May 22, 2023**

**Lisa F. Lazarus
Business Owner and Concerned Citizen**

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

Thank you for allowing me to submit this written testimony. My name is Lisa F. Lazarus. I am a business owner and concerned citizen, and I live and work in Shaker Heights, Ohio. I write to request that you oppose House Bill 68.

Like most of you, I am not a physician, nor am I a mental health professional. I go to physicians and mental health professionals to obtain their professional expertise and treatment, and that is what other people do too. If I were to be unable to have my physician or mental health professional treat me based on what the research, evidence, and their medical training suggest, I would be horrified. My blood boils when I consider the notion of my medical professional being unable to treat me as they know to do and as they see I need.

Healthcare providers should not be told—by House Bill 68 or any other government bill aimed at preventing healthcare workers from doing what they were trained to do—what they may or may not do. Putting restrictions on the types of testing or screening that mental health professionals must do before treating those who have come to them for care is insulting. Moreover, physicians, who have attended years of schooling and passed board exams to enable them to practice, should not be prevented from performing surgery or from prescribing medicine that they know their patients need.

House Bill 68 is attempting to take rights away from trained and certified physicians and mental health professionals. I am deeply concerned that, if this were to become law, physicians and mental health professionals would leave our state or not want to come here in large numbers, which would be devastating to our state's healthcare system. The government should play absolutely no role in removing medical professionals' decision-making options.

Furthermore, during this time—when rates of mental health issues, suicidal attempts, and completed suicides have risen dramatically—it is even more critical that mental health professionals can do the work they need to do to support patients in their care.

I ask that you please consider my testimony and vote no on House Bill 68.

Thank you.