

# Find Your Way Counseling & Consulting LLC

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Date: 5/22/23

RE: HB68

To: Chair Lipps, Vice-Chair Stewart, Ranking Member Liston & members of the Public Health Policy Committee

My name is Jennifer Palmer and I am a full-time private practice therapist at Find Your Way Consulting and Consulting. I have a Master's Degree in Social Work from Binghamton University and am independently licensed with supervisory designation in the state of Ohio. I am an Ohio resident. Throughout my career as a therapist, I have worked as a home and community-based therapist, a school-based therapist, and in private practice. I have been working as a mental health therapist in the state of Ohio since 2010.

I am writing this testimony in opposition of HB68. As a licensed social worker who has worked directly with the transgender and gender non-conforming population, I have experience in understanding Gender Dysphoria, co-morbid mental health diagnoses, and helping the clients I work with be well adjusted, happy, safe, and healthy. It is my belief that this bill will be extremely harmful to youth who identify as transgender and gender non-conforming. If this bill passes, it would create tremendous barriers to gender affirming care at critical times in the lives of youth. Therapists would be limited in the supportive and affirmative care that they have been providing to the clients they serve. This could put children and adolescents at risk of not seeking care, and further stigmatizing this already marginalized population. It is my firm belief that all medical decisions for children and adolescents are best made by the people who know them best, their parent/guardian. Parents/guardians, in collaboration with their child/adolescent, should be able to take the action steps needed for their child/adolescent to live happy and healthy lives. This bill would deny parents/guardians their right to do this by placing these decisions in the hands of the government.

I implore you to reject HB68 and any legislation that prevents children and youth who identify as transgender or gender non-conforming from receiving gender affirming care. Their right to care should continue to be decided by the collaboration between child/adolescent and their parent/guardian.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J A Palmer', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jennifer A Palmer, LISW-S

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