

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_, Vice Chair \_\_\_\_\_, Ranking Member \_\_\_\_\_, and members of the House Committee - thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Maureen Smith. I am a middle-aged transgender woman, my pronouns are she/her/hers, and I am a wife and mother who has lived in Ohio my entire adult life. I am strongly opposed to House Bill 68, which effectively bans medical care for transgender children.

Gender-affirming care is essentially a settled science. The following major medical associations publicly support gender-affirming care for all individuals, including children:

The World Health Organization  
The American Academy of Pediatrics  
The Endocrine Society  
The Pediatric Endocrine Society  
The American Medical Association  
The American Psychiatric Association  
The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

I have suffered from gender dysphoria (the feeling that my gender does not match my biological sex) my entire life, but it wasn't until my late 30s that I was finally able to express these feelings. I grew up in an environment extremely hostile to transgender people. I have suffered from the resulting depression, anxiety, and social isolation my entire life, culminating in multiple suicide attempts. The latest, in my mid-30s, nearly succeeded. Once I finally realized I was suffering from gender dysphoria, and started receiving psychological and medical treatment for it, my quality of life drastically improved. My loved ones, my doctors, my co-workers, and the people with whom I grew up all see just how much I have improved since I began the treatment. Any one of them would be willing to stand before you today and testify that this treatment literally saved my life.

I moved to Ohio when I was 18, and have spent the majority of my life here. My wife and children were born here. In all those years I have never seriously considered relocating my family from Ohio, until now. With bills such as HB 68 and HB 616, which are expressly hostile toward people like me, I have begun to fear for my and my children's safety. I fear for my ability to continue to receive the critical medical treatment I need in my adoptive home state. Based on the example being set by other state legislatures across the USA, I fear more laws hostile to my and my family's existence will be proposed and passed. I feel like we are refugees in our own home, and that the longer we live here, the greater the danger to our lives and livelihoods.

What House Bill 68 does is take away medically-sound, effective treatments for gender dysphoria from the most vulnerable: our children. It does not ban these treatments for all children, only those who are transgender. It would force their parents to sit and watch as dysphoria eats away at their child's heart, especially once they begin puberty and their body develops in ways even more incongruent to their true identity. It is a blanket ban, without cause, on a proven medical treatment that literally saves the lives of a small, yet significant, portion of Ohioans, according to all the medical associations I listed earlier in my testimony.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote no on this cruel and unfair bill. Doing so will literally save children's lives, and allow me and my family to remain in the only true home we've ever known.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Maureen Smith  
Columbus, OH