

## **Opposition Testimony for House Bill 68**

**May 22, 2023**

**By Kat Steiner**

Hello and thank you for your time today. My name is Kat Steiner and I live in a suburb of Cincinnati in Fairfax, Ohio. I am the parent of 3 children, including a 16-year old daughter who made national news when she was selected as the first transgender Homecoming princess at her high school with contention.

Even though I live in a metropolitan area now, I grew up in rural Preble County. My parents were educators at local districts. My mom taught English literature and my father taught government and civics - both of them for more than 30 years. My parents were not radical or controversial, but my father believed in civic education and my mother was devoted to humanities. I learned quickly that being a teacher meant that not everyone agreed with your curriculum and one take away from growing up in a small community is that a person can get more done by finding commonalities instead of pointing out differences.

This is what I would like to do. Focus on similarities that bind us and not what we disagree on. Representative Gary Click was the guest columnist in the Freemont News on September 11, 2021 with a piece titled: Act Would Protect Individual Privacy if Passed.

For my testimony, I'm using this article to respectfully highlight the parallels between the SAFE Act wanting to eliminate gender affirming healthcare for youth and the Individual Privacy and Anti-Discrimination Act that sought to mandate vaccines that was endorsed by members of Ohio's GOP in 2021. I have striked through the author's copy and highlighted my own words, but otherwise the writing below is taken directly from the printed editorial.

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**Gary Click: Act would protect individual privacy if passed**

By Columnist Gary Click

"Those who would give up essential Liberty, to purchase a little temporary Safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety."

This oft-quoted wisdom of Benjamin Franklin represented that heartbeat of the American Revolution. This doctrine flows in our blood and is woven into the fabric of our DNA. It is also the context of **House Bill 68, Save Adolescents From Experimentation Act (SAFE)**. ~~Individual Privacy and Anti-Discrimination Act, which I introduced on Tuesday with my colleague, State Rep. Diane Grendell.~~

The Franklin quote stands in stark contrast to the mantra of a lady that vehemently scolded me, "We are just going to have to give up some of our rights to keep everyone safe!"

"Not on my watch," I softly and kindly replied with a firm resolve.

### **Split between world views**

**Gender Affirming Healthcare** ~~COVID-19~~ has split the nation not necessarily along party lines but more accurately according to worldviews. In fact, I can't help but find the irony in the **Republicans** ~~Democrats~~ who want to **eliminate** ~~mandate~~ what is essentially **lifesaving care**. ~~Trump vaccine.~~

Herein lies the contrast. **Leftists** ~~Conservatives~~ create the opportunity while **conservatives** ~~leftists~~ cry out for obedience and compliance. It is the difference between empowerment and control.

Debates over the efficacy of **gender affirming healthcare** ~~the available vaccines~~ have stolen the spotlight from the core issue at hand. As the saying goes, "You can't see the forest for the trees." I grow weary of arguments about **detransitioners, medical efficacy, magnetism, 5G towers** and other conspiracy theories **like being possessed by demons**. They serve as nothing more than a distraction from the truly relevant discussions that surround **gender affirming healthcare** ~~the vaccines~~.

There are inherent risks with **gender affirming healthcare** ~~vaccines~~ as with most medical interventions. Some people are at higher risk than others. Medical history is a critical factor. Health care professionals have reported **gender affirming healthcare** ~~vaccine~~ injuries.

**Gender affirming healthcare** ~~Vaccine~~ hesitancy among health care professionals should be enough to cause people to at least do some research. Instead, there is a movement to **eliminate** ~~mandate~~. Don't research. Don't consult your physician. Don't consider mitigating factors. Just trust your university, employer, travel agent or worse yet, the government to make your medical choices. They want to bribe you, coax you, and coerce you to follow their prescription.

### **Climate of fear is dangerous to democracy, harms American spirit**

This climate of fear is not based in science nor rooted in the founding principles of our republic. It is dangerous to our democracy and disastrous to the decency of the American spirit. Why should people be treated as second-class citizens simply based on their personal medical history? This is wrong. We cannot allow activists to politicize an individual's personal medical choices.

I was informed the bill **requires mental health professionals who diagnose or treat a minor for gender related conditions to annually report certain information to the Ohio Department of Health** ~~multiple institutions that require orange stickers on name badges to declare to the public your vaccination status~~.

Consider the fact that in this climate people are assumed to be **saved by medically necessary gender affirming care** ~~carriers simply because they have not been vaccinated~~. **The CDC reports 1.4% of 13-17 year olds identify as transgender and need healthcare**. ~~Over 1.2 million people in Ohio have been infected with COVID-19 and carry natural antibodies~~. Yet they can be denied an education, an income, or even access to public goods and services because they **received gender affirming healthcare endorsed by leading medical groups** ~~not been vaccinated~~. Wrong again. This is morally wrong.

Yes, I've heard the counterarguments. "It's our duty to protect others from **social contagion** ~~contracting the virus~~. We have to prevent the spread."

Who are you protecting, **transgender youth** ~~the vaccinated~~? I thought that was why they **needed gender affirming healthcare** ~~got vaccinated~~. Are you protecting **those not seeking gender affirming healthcare** ~~unvaccinated~~ — didn't they make a conscious choice?

You are protecting those who **receive gender affirming care** ~~cannot get vaccinated~~ — really? Those are the ones you are discriminating against. They are the ones being banned, ostracized, and told that they cannot participate.

### **Good old-fashioned common sense is needed**

It's time that we wake up to some good old-fashioned common sense. **Healthcare** ~~Vaccination~~ is a private and personal medical choice that should be made in consultation with your personal physician. It is absolutely the right choice for many people but not for all people. No one should be ostracized, objectified, discriminated against, or impugned in any way regardless of the choice they make.

**The SAFE Act** ~~Individual Privacy and Anti-Discrimination Act~~ goes to the root of the issue. Each individual is entitled to privacy when it comes to their personal, medical choices. There is no clear and convincing evidence that protecting their privacy is a threat to their neighbors. Protecting the privacy of everyone's medical choices effectively dissipates further discussions on mandates, branding and other inappropriate actions based on an individual's **healthcare** ~~vaccine~~ status.

What we do on this issue is pivotal and critical. If we surrender privacy and medical autonomy on this issue, we can certainly expect greater invasions of privacy and loss of bodily autonomy in the future.

If we stop it here, we draw a line in the sand securing those inalienable rights endowed to us by our Creator. The line we draw today will affect the lives our children will live tomorrow -- we can't afford to fail. That's why I am **asking you to vote in OPPOSITION for House Bill 68, the SAFE Act** ~~introducing the Individual Privacy and Anti-Discrimination Act~~.

<https://www.thenews-messenger.com/story/opinion/2021/09/11/gary-click-act-would-protect-individual-privacy-passed/5768072001/>