

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HOUSE BILL 68 – “Saving Adolescents from Experimentation (SAFE) Act.”

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

My name is Sonny, and I am writing today in strong opposition to HB68. I am a transgender man living in Cincinnati and I see firsthand the harm that healthcare bans like this are doing to my community, both locally and across the nation. In April I attended the bill’s first hearing and heard Representative Click’s testimony in person. That testimony contained blatant lies about hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and its physical and mental effects on a patient’s health. Science is not on Rep. Click’s side here and he knows it, which is why he has resorted to citing the American College of Pediatricians (ACPeds) in his testimony – a group which the Southern Poverty Law Center has designated as an extremist hate group. From the SPLC website, “[ACPeds is] a fringe anti-LGBTQ hate group that masquerades as the premier U.S. association of pediatricians to push anti-LGBTQ junk science, primarily via far-right conservative media.” Rep. Click also stated in a sermon at his church that queer people are being lied to by Satan and that we commit suicide because we’re “defying nature” (as opposed to being stripped of our rights by bigoted policies like this one). This bill, introduced by a man so thoroughly invested in using his religion to marginalize other human beings, has no place in the Ohio legislature.

You say in the bill that transgender people receiving the care they need is of “grave concern to the General Assembly,” even though the American Medical Association (an actual medical organization, not an extremist fringe group) has attested to the safety and effectiveness of HRT and puberty blockers at treating not only gender dysphoria but also the majority of conditions that are listed in this bill as disqualifiers for treatment. Of course a person suffering from gender dysphoria would be anxious, of course they would be depressed! Being transgender does not cause these conditions; the world causes them through its hatred and intolerance. Living genuinely and freely as yourself, surrounded by people who love and accept you, and receiving medical care to help you transition; those are the things that will help transgender children live to be transgender adults.

Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are enshrined in the Declaration of Independence as founding principles of our country, and transgender children deserve those rights too. This bill will not keep kids “safe,” as the name implies, and taking away healthcare that is both desperately needed and scientifically proven is not the right path forward for our state.

Sincerely yours,

Sonny Calzaretta