

June 12, 2023

Testimony of Madelyn McKinney
(Written only)
Against HB 68

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

Hello! My name is Madelyn McKinney and I am a graduate student, School Counselor trainee, and lifelong Ohio resident. I am testifying due to my concerns about the effects of HB 68, should it be passed.

HB 68 seeks to ban gender affirming care which may include hormone therapy, puberty blocking medications, gender-related mental health treatment, and gender-affirming surgeries.

As a counseling trainee and future school-based professional, I implore you to consider the harmful effects of this bill. I believe that such important and personal medical decisions should be decided by individuals, their families, and their doctors—not politicians. I also believe that everyone deserves to be able to live as their authentic self, including transgender minors. I understand how, as parents, educators, and members of the community, you may be concerned about a minor's desire to receive medical care that does not align with their sex assigned at birth. There must be a lot of questions and uncertainties, all of which I do not have time to address in this testimony. I ask you instead to consider the dangers of refusing gender-affirming care. Over a decade's worth of research shows that gender affirming care for trans minors can reduce depression and prevent suicide. In a study just last year from the Journal of the American Medical Association, researchers found that transgender minors who received gender-affirming care were 73% less likely to become suicidal and 60% less likely to experience depression. If minors who do not feel that they fit their sex assigned at birth are declined gender-affirming care, we are risking increased levels of depression, and even suicide. As a future mental health professional, this data is incredibly concerning if HB 68 is passed. The mental health and lives of our students, children, family, and community members is in jeopardy. I humbly ask you to consider these detrimental consequences of banning gender care for minors.

I do not write any of this lightly or without much reflection; I write this with a heavy heart, fearful of the futures of my trans and gender-nonconforming students. I understand your hesitation—I was once hesitant to support such procedures for minors as well, but I now see clearly that the consequences of denying this type of care are far worse than any side effects or second thoughts that may result from it. I hope that you hear these words with an open mind and caring heart.

I thank you generously for your time, open-mindedness, and consideration, and respectfully ask your opposition to HB 68.

References

Tordoff DM, Wanta JW, Collin A, Stepney C, Inwards-Breland DJ, Ahrens K. Mental Health Outcomes in Transgender and Nonbinary Youths Receiving Gender-Affirming Care. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2022;5(2):e220978. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.0978

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/what-the-science-on-gender-affirming-care-for-transgender-kids-really-shows/>