

HB68 Testimony  
Dara Adkison  
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Thank you to the committee for reading my testimony today. My name is Dara Adkison and I am a resident of Northeast Ohio. While I am on the board of TransOhio (TransOhio is Ohio's first and largest transgender equity organization), this is my personal testimony, my testimony as a parent, a transgender parent, and as a community member in contact with and helping many other parents.

I'd like to share a small sample of interactions that I have had with parents of transgender and gender non-conforming children in the last week. Some of these were with folks who reached out to me because of my capacity with TransOhio, and others are just personal friends.

- One mom of a child not yet old enough to take puberty blockers has started planning how her family can leave the state before their kid starts puberty. Both parents are community established professional with deep roots.
- Another mom of a child who has taken puberty blockers for years doesn't want her child to be forced through the wrong puberty. Her child is happy, well adjusted, and their school doesn't even know they are transgender.
- A dad loves seeing his kid happy and confident. His kid is a great student, and loves their community. The family has already begun researching how to leave the state. How much extended family would be able to follow with them and what jobs they can find elsewhere.
- Parents of a child waiting on their first appointment consult to consider blockers fear for what it means for their kid if they can't get necessary healthcare. They are business owners and moving would destroy their established livelihood. They are considering it anyways.
- Other parents want their kid to continue receiving healthcare, but they can't both afford to move. They are now considering splitting their family across multiple states if this bill passes.

These interactions represent examples of an insurmountable amount of conversations with parents in recent weeks. This bill will devastate families. Healthcare choices should be between parents, children and their doctors. State resources are being wasted because a small handful of legislators see having a happy trans kid as worse than if that same kid is miserable through childhood and has a harder adulthood. These same legislators say they care about parents' rights, but what about the rights of parents who affirm their trans children? Why does the liberty of these families mean less than other Ohioans?

Even if you make the lives of trans kids harder, that won't stop the fact that trans people have always been and will always be a part of society, of our communities. You can choose to be cruel and hurt trans kids, you can make them sad, you can make their childhoods harder, but those trans kids will grow into trans adults whether you like it or not, because it isn't actually up to you, nor should it be.

You don't need to understand transgender people. What you do need to accept is that good parents want what's best for their children, and infringing on those parental needs is an affront to their right to liberty within this state.

Please, I implore you to protect the liberty of all Ohioans and vote no on HB68

- Dara Adkison