

December 1, 2023

Kristina Roegner, Chair
Government Oversight Committee
Ohio Senate
1 Capitol Square
1st Floor, #142
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Senator Roegner,

My name is Rabbi Ruth Alpers, MAHL, BCC. I am a board-certified chaplain through Neshama: Association of Jewish Chaplains. I have over 29 years of experience in providing spiritual care for patients and their caregivers.

I write to you today to share the story of a woman who I'll call Tracy and her child. I have known Tracy for more than twenty years, before she became a mother. Tracy has cherished her child since the day of her child's birth. This child was assigned female at birth. At an early age, the child expressed gender dysphoria, and this increased as the child progressed through elementary school. When Tracy realized that her child's gender dysphoria was consistent, persistent, and insistent, she took her child to the transgender clinic at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. There they found answers to their questions, and they received supportive care from medical and psychosocial providers.

The child continued to be consistent, insistent, and persistent about his gender expression being different than his sex assigned at birth. As the child entered puberty, together with his mother, he decided to receive a puberty blocking implant to allow him to live into his full identity as a young man. He and his mother continued to receive care through the transgender clinic at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. With his mother's support, her son legally changed his name.

For two years following receiving his puberty blocker, he went to a summer camp for adolescents who identify as transgender, and he found both community and friends with whom he remains in contact some years later. He has graduated from high school and will begin his college education this fall.

Without the support of his mother and the members of the interdisciplinary team at the transgender clinic at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, this story might have had a very different outcome.

The practice of medicine and decision-making needs to be between parents, the child/adolescent/young adult and the medical team. Taking away parental rights and legislating

health care will lead to heartache and tragedy. Data indicates that the rate of suicidality in trans/gender fluid youth is more than 40% compared with 13% in their peers.

I implore you to vote against HB 68.

Sincerely,
Ruth Alpers