

Dec. 4, 2023

HB 68 Opponent Testimony

Dear Ohio Senators:

Please vote against approval of HB 68. This needlessly hurtful bill will cause far more harm than it prevents. Like people everywhere, Ohioans are amazingly diverse. People are born and live their lives across a broad spectrum that reflects the incredible power and complexities of the human brain.

Every one of us experiences life through the filter of our own brain – we see, hear, believe, seek, and know only what our senses can detect, and our brains can process. Thus, we each live a unique life as products of our combined genetics and environment. It’s amazing that in a world of billions, no two people are the same.

It can be difficult to understand people whose minds work differently than our own. Where one sees red, another person sees gray. Where one tastes delight, another person may taste disgust (eating beets for example!). A melody may sound heavenly to some, and repugnant to others. And what is the harm in that? None. Indeed, it is this amazing diversity that has allowed us to create civilization and together cherish the many joys that life can offer. We need people with diverse minds to navigate life together.

Likewise, some brains are wired differently when it comes to sexual preferences and identities. As a straight male, I can’t really know what it feels like to feel romantic attraction to another male. My brain is simply not wired that way. But I certainly can understand the power of attraction to certain people. I can only imagine how harmful and hurtful it would be if I was not allowed to love as my brain dictates. But that has often been the reality for many members of the LBGTO community. Please don’t perpetuate this wrong. Allow every Ohioan to live their own lives.

In the case of trans people, it’s not who their brain is wired to love – it’s who their brain says they are. Brain wiring, not genitals, truly determines people’s gender. And since my brain identifies as male, I can’t imagine what it would be like if I were forced to live life in any other way. Please give transgender people the same right, dignity, and comfort without needless government interference or intervention.

Nobody chooses their gender identity or preferences casually. Indeed, people who come to realize that they are transgender often do so only after years of struggle. And when they choose to live as they know themselves, they understand that it will make life more difficult in many ways. They know that they will subject themselves to potential discrimination, ridicule, inquisition, and physical attack. But they choose to live as their brains dictate, because living life as one’s authentic self is the only choice that makes sense. Living life contrary to one’s own brain wiring is a recipe for disaster, as many families, medical professionals, educators, suicide hotlines, and counselors can attest.

Please leave these difficult conversations and decisions in the hands of individuals, families, and medical professionals. None of these people are trying to cause harm to others. They just want to be left alone to figure out what they need to do to live happy, productive lives or to help their patients do the same. Most Ohio residents do not want the State to interfere with personal medical care or decisions, or to legalize bigotry. They do not support a solution in search of a problem. They want school decisions made locally. They don’t want people’s lives politicized. In short, they want to be left alone. Please give us all an early Christmas gift and reject HB 68.

Thank you,

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