



Ohio Senate Government Oversight Committee

Good afternoon, Chair Roegner and distinguished members of the Senate Government Oversight Committee:

My name is Ari DeWolf. I am a Cincinnati – born and raised. I am a graduate of my hometown’s School for Creative & Performing Arts, where I served as president of my student body, and far more recently, as chair of our alumni development committee. I was elected youth vice mayor of our city, and served in every local nonprofit, governmental and political campaign capacity afforded to me. The very first candidate for whom I ever volunteered, Alicia Reese, later became a member of the House opposite for eight years. I was so young when volunteering on my first campaign, my parents had to hire a babysitter to tag along.

You see, I quite proudly represent the fourth generation of an Ohio family, a branch of one of our country’s oldest free black families. Some of you may know my much more famous cousin, Nick Chubb of Cleveland. I don’t really understand football, but I’m told he’s good at what he does for the Browns.

My story is America’s story. And in turn, America’s story, my own. Growing up with such a visceral sense of history, no doubt, helped make me the man I am today. One confident in my own contradictions, which the poet Whitman would say, exist precisely because we humans, upon finding ourselves, contain multitudes.

My grave concern is that big politics and big money have joined forces to undermine the rights of America’s ascending generation: the right, first and foremost, to discover for ourselves who we truly are, let alone freely act, without coercion.

Today, there is a wholly novel, yet increasingly convenient, pipeline of lifelong medicalization encouraged for our children and adolescents. Not only are its pharmaceutical drugs and surgical interventions untested, young people, parents,

professionals in medicine, law, and public policy, are met with hostility and threats, if we simply ask questions or raise nuisances.

Our very moral character is eviscerated, the homes in which are families live, are doxed, our means to make a livelihood, besieged.

Senators, the medical community is not policing themselves. There is a larger, deeply politicized, and entirely self-interested phenomenon at play. We see its bitter fruit across American life. Leaving very few places, outside our legislatures themselves, where voices such as you are hearing today, may be freely expressed.

Although, I assure you, our free expression still comes with a price.

Yet, no matter the costs, I could not simply sit back and watch from the sidelines. My background is in economics. Prior to joining this work, I advised policymakers across our states on school finance policy. It was an intellectually rewarding role, and hardly controversial. It, in fact, allowed me to engage across the political spectrum, all the while, seeking to spend the public purse prudently – two of my great passions in politics.

When I'd come home to read or listen to the news, however, I would regularly ask my husband, if he too, felt there was something amiss, intuitively, about the rise and expanse of young people feeling disconnected with their bodies.

What I learned early on, when seriously engaging these issues, was that this was a common experience among those in my parents' generation. In so far as, they did not fall perfectly in line with the so-called gender binary, with the stereotypes of contemporary culture. They recognized, how easily they could have fallen prey to these irreversible, mechanized "solutions." Instead, they forged lives as gay men and lesbian women. Straight men and straight women. They have families they could create with their own reproductive organs, intact. And experience sexual function – again, with their reproductive organs intact.

Further, I learned how many of those my age and younger who suffer from comorbidities such as autism, have been preyed upon by this emerging multibillion dollar industry.

I have been privileged by working hand in glove with patient-victims, parent-victims, physicians, therapist, nurses, lawyers, lawmakers, and active citizens like myself, who are leading the counter culture. Who are implementing the proper levels of informed consent for families, bringing insurers to the table to protect

transitioners and detransitioners alike, and asking for balance in psychotherapy treatment.

These are not people with hate their heart. *Hardly!* They are leading with love and highly sophisticated policy recommendations to help all children and adolescents, and their families. They are mitigating the politicization of American life and our institutions through meaningful reforms and new cultural norms.

As we close this historic year, I still wonder whether proponents of our failed status-quo really believed the peoples' representatives would stand idly by, failing to protect our next generation? Or that the mothers of America, too many of whom, must live their civic lives in the shadows, would not organize to protect their children. It is the mothers of America who are at the forefront of this movement. It is the honor of a lifetime to stand here representing them, in particular.

Thank you for your time.