

Opponent Testimony for House Bill 68
Government Oversight Committee
Wednesday, December 6, 2023

Ricky Fite

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Government Oversight Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Ricky Fite. I am 22 years old, I am transgender nonbinary, and I strongly oppose HB 68.

I was only 14 when I began receiving gender affirming care. Before that point, I was struggling with worsening clinical depression that started with the onset of puberty. My depression grew so severe that I was suicidal for most of middle school. The worst part? I didn't know what was wrong with me or **why**. It was completely by chance that I learned about gender dysphoria and what it means to be transgender; they certainly didn't teach us anything about it in school. When I stumbled upon that information, it was like everything suddenly clicked into place; like my whole life up until that point finally made sense. I eventually came out to my family, and I am **extremely lucky** to have parents that are supportive of my identity. I met at least two dozen other trans students over my 4 years in high school, but I can count on a single hand the number of kids with supportive families. And **not one** was receiving gender affirming care.

At age 14, I began seeing a big team of specialists (5 different doctors) through the THRIVE Gender Development program at Nationwide Children's Hospital. I was seeing a doctor at least once a week for *months*. At the time, this consisted of a minimum of 6 months of both therapy (for myself and my parents) and psychiatry before I was allowed to receive any type of physical medical care like hormone therapy. They wanted to be **absolutely certain** that this was the correct treatment path for me before letting me do anything to my body. I *wish* it was as easy to get hormones as all those transphobic arguments make it out to be. The waitlist just to get in to *meet* a pediatric endocrinologist who specializes in gender affirming care? **SUPER LONG**. Anyway, at age 16, I got a double-mastectomy at a clinic I will not name, only with the consent of my parents and written testimony from my psychiatrist, therapist, endocrinologist, and two pediatricians. Had I not been able to receive any of this life-saving care as a minor, I **would not be alive today**. I am here today to testify on behalf of all of the kids like me who never grew up, and all of the future kids who will not get the chance if this abhorrent bill is allowed to pass.

I ask that you please consider my testimony and **vote no on HB 68**. Thank you.