

## Opponent Testimony Against HB 68

### Government Oversight Committee

December 4, 2023

Thank you for taking time to read my testimony. I am the parent of a transgender child. His journey started when he was only 3 or 4.

As a child, I watched as she would play pretend with her sisters and she would be the dad, uncle or brother. When she created avatars on xbox or other video games, she created the image to look like a boy. In preschool and elementary school, she would draw herself in pictures and she would look like a boy with short hair, no eyelashes and masculine clothes. As she got older, she started talking more to me about being a boy. I never brought up the subject, I would always wait for her to bring it up. The first night she said out loud that she might want to be a boy, I held in my tears (like I did for every conversation) until she went to sleep and then I went to my neighbor and broke down in her arms. I didn't want this future for my daughter. As she continued to grow, I noticed more and more people confusing her for a boy. She just had a certain look, even before she cut her hair. Before her hair appt, we spent hours looking at pictures to see what kind of haircut she wanted. Once again, I was trying to steer her to a pixie cut or something more feminine than a buzz cut. The first haircut she got, was kind of longer and girly. I thought she looked so cute but she really didn't like it. We went back a few days later to have it cut shorter but it still wasn't enough. She wanted to have an electric razor used. So we went back a 3rd time and she got the haircut she loved- she was so happy!

But that happiness didn't last long because her body started to change. She would only do things where she could wear a sweatshirt to cover her body. She stopped playing outside when it was too hot to wear a sweatshirt. She didn't go swimming. I knew we needed to do something.

We did a lot of research about options, talked to our pediatrician and trusted friends. We decided to reach out to a psychologist to discuss our options. After lengthy discussions about the pros, cons & risks we decided to talk with our child about puberty suppressants. She so confidently expressed that she wanted to stop the changes and that she wanted to be a boy. I told her she didn't need to make that decision yet, but she needed to decide if she wanted to pause and take more time. She emphatically said yes.

Something changed in me during that conversation. I felt I was given direction from my child on what she wanted and it was up to me to make it happen. Up until that moment I was always cautious when talking about my child's future path. I never wanted to push her in either direction so I kept everything open. And if I'm being honest, I was still holding out hope that she would remain a girl. But after that conversation, I felt so much confidence about the path she was going down. I've also been able to talk about her journey without shedding a tear (well, almost no tears). I was so proud of her.

After that conversation, I jumped with my entire being into getting her started on that medicine. And boy did it take everything in me. The hospital we reached out to has a very strict process to make sure every child is getting the correct care. Medicine isn't the best option for every child so they require both parents and the child to meet with a psychologist together and separately. We are also required to have a lengthy discussion with the endocrinologist about the pros and cons of the medicine and then we have to sign a form. The last step is blood tests & xrays to make sure the child is ready for the medicine. This whole process took over 2 months. While it was hard, I am grateful that dr's spend so much time ensuring they are doing what's best for that individual child. Gender care isn't a 1 size fits all solution.

This might be hard for some to understand. Heck, I don't fully understand it. I don't have a good answer for "why can't she just be a girl with a masculine appearance". Just like I don't have a good answer for what makes me feel that I identify as a girl. I just know I'm a girl just like my child knows he's a boy.

This bill would take away MY parental rights to get the best medical care I can for him. I hope this letter provides a glimpse into how hard this journey has been for me and that getting medical care for my son wasn't taken lightly or done quickly. My son wasn't talked into this transition by us or anyone else in his life- that's not how it works.

Please vote no on HB 68 and allow us, as his parents, to help him lead his life. His health care decisions belong in his doctor's office with his parents and the providers that know him, not the government that is seeking to expose him and block his path towards adulthood.