

**Opponent Testimony for House Bill 68
Dec 6, 2023**

**Rev. Lisa Kerwin, Retired Clergy
United Methodist Church**

Chair Roegner, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Lisa Kerwin, my pronouns are she/her

I am a retired United Methodist Clergy person, with special emphasis in pastoral care; I'm still active in particular ways; I am co-founder of the Tri-State Reconciling Ministry Network in the Greater Cinti area, and started the Intentionally Affirming Ministry at my previous local church. I also serve on the United Methodist Great Miami River District's Stop Racism team.

I am here to oppose house bill 68 in its entirety.

I am also a grandmother to 5, one being gender non-binary and another whose partner is gender non-binary. My granddaughter, whose partner is non-binary, is a student at Xavier University studying political science, hoping to make a difference in an exceedingly intolerant and unsafe country. Just reading House Bill 68 caused anxiety for her, as it does for all my grandchildren who want to see a just world.

In addition, I have walked with several families through the tragedy of suicide, and then suffered my own daughter's suicide. While these particular suicides were not about gender issues, suicide is on the rise, and those who are transgender teens are at special risk.

My concern is that this bill is misinformed and misguided, with little understanding of what it means to be trans-gender. I also question the real motivation and concern behind the bill, and have doubts about the research done in reference to what are believed to be concerns. My biggest concern is the severe consequences this bill will bring about: namely an increase in severe anxiety, depression and suicide in an already highly anxious country. In addition, bans such as this one continue to put a target on those who are trans-gender causing an increase in hate and violence toward them.

To deny young people to live within their gender identity, which includes participating in sports, is denying their very humanity. There is plenty of research out there that discounts the notion of unfair advantage.

As far as courts and custody hearings are concerned, each case should be taken individually, and without limitations to a child's expressed gender identity. Courts and

judges should be looking at the best interest of the child, and the potential for harm, and if relevant, the child's gender identity should be considered..

The health care given to transgender children and young adults is never taken lightly. We should let the experts do their jobs. Schuler Bailer, a trans male author and speaker, and who has done the research, says: "Widely agreed upon by all major medical, psychological, and psychiatric associations, gender-affirming care is medically necessary and appropriate, evidence-based healthcare." Being transgender is not a mental illness, but their care is a multidisciplinary approach. Further, gender-affirming care for children rarely includes going into the operating room.

To deny such care is to devalue the humanness of those who are clear about their own gender identity. The bottom line is that this bill will cause great harm. I plead with you, as our representatives, to focus on mental health, gun violence, housing and other issues that need the attention, things that bring healing and wholeness instead of harm.

Thank you. I'm happy to answer any questions.