



Belonging Begins Here.

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

Thank you for your time today. My name is Jennifer Kuhn. I use she/her pronouns, and I am the Director of Community Partnerships and External Relations at Kaleidoscope Youth Center. I've been with Kaleidoscope for over six years, and prior to that I was a communications specialist in the suicide prevention field. Collectively, I have approximately 12 years of communications and marketing experience.

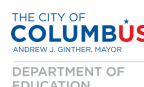
My colleagues, my peers, my mentors, social workers, clinicians, doctors, dozens upon dozens of accredited organizations backed by scientific research, those with lived experience, families, and friends, have all stood before the Ohio House, and stand before the Ohio Senate today, with facts and pleas to stop HB68.

I won't rehash all of their information and stories, because you have access to it, so instead, as a communications professional, I want to explore what message you would be sending by voting in favor of HB68.

In marketing, you want to create a connection with your audience. As an elected official, ideally you create connections with your constituents, taking their wants and needs into consideration as you advocate for your people amongst your peers.

If you vote in favor of HB68, not only would you be telling a whole subsection of Ohioans that they don't belong in this state; you would be creating - with the people you represent, with the hundreds of people who have stepped up to the microphone pleading with you to not further segregate a marginalized group in our community - a further disconnect in a time of great division.

If you vote in favor of HB68, you would be telling trans youth and their families that they are not "your people". You would be telling your fellow Ohioans that their struggle isn't



important to you. That when it comes to the parents working in conjunction with accredited medical professionals, that their “parental rights” don’t matter.

If you vote in favor of HB68, you are telling the world that you are willing to legislate what a medical professional can and can’t do to save a life. That you actually couldn’t care less that lives will be lost because you think you know better about a stranger’s mental and physical health.

The truth is that the overwhelming majority of people who have stood before you advocating for HB68, were from out of state. To quote a defining movie of my generation, “She doesn’t even go here!” That absolutely sends a message that you don’t care what your actual constituents think. You are putting more weight on outside interests.

We who are here writing and testifying and pleading with you are Ohioans. We all don’t have the same faith, the same hobbies, the same favorite TV shows, the same political backgrounds, the same jobs, but we all matter. Your job is to connect with all of us and listen to the people who actually live here.

You might ask, “Well what about the handful of Ohioans concerned about the dangers of gender-affirming care?”

First, I invite those individuals to actually sit down with organizations like Kaleidoscope Youth Center and talk through their concerns. They might find that the scenarios they are presenting to you are based on speculations, half-truths, and imaginations run wild.

Second, we are all currently on the same playing field. Proponents of HB68 have nothing to lose. If you don’t believe in the LGBTQ+ experience, then don’t be LGBTQ+. If your religion tells you being trans is wrong (it’s not), then don’t be trans. But why force others to conform to those ideas when plenty of qualified individuals are telling you gender-affirming care is best practice? Why vote in favor of HB68 and strip rights away from an already marginalized community?

Our state motto is back to “The heart of it all!” Please, don’t make the word “all” include the ideas of transphobia, homophobia, and the disregard of what Ohioans want.

Instead, send a message of hope. Of love. Of kindness. Of compassion. Of empathy. Be part of a world that is possible; where every individual has an opportunity to be who



they are, and can thrive because of the abundance of support they have from their community. We can do this together.

In closing, please listen to the pleas of your constituents, not outside special interest groups, and send a positive message to all Ohioans that everyone here belongs by voting “no” on HB68.



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