

Opponent Testimony for HB 68
Government Oversight Committee
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Chair Kristina Roegner, Vice Chair Niraj Antani, Ranking Member Paula Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Government Oversight Committee,

Thank you for considering my testimony this afternoon. My name is Felix Prewitt and I am a 16 year old high school student in Grove City, Ohio. Every day my peers and I face the full impact of anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination and we are suffering. This bill only seeks to further the suffering of all students, LGBTQ+ and otherwise, therefore I have written today to oppose the bill.

The World Health Organization recognizes a mental health epidemic in youth. One in every seven children are suffering from a mental health disorder, with astonishingly few receiving the treatment they need. Lack of mental health treatment leads to suicide being the second leading cause of death for those between the ages of 10 and 34. Nearly half of all transgender youth have seriously considered or attempted suicide in the past year, almost all citing an unsupportive environment as a risk factor. The wound that has been left on this generation of youth can be seen everywhere within the school environment. Jokes between friends about their fear of not surviving another day; students trembling as they sit in class; a feeling of hopelessness around

every corner. We need help. We need compassion. This bill seeks only to incite fear and unacceptance for our most vulnerable populations. The key to improved mental health for LGBTQ+ youth is acceptance. Consider that out of all LGBTQ+ youth who attempt suicide, only 9% report an accepting environment. The other 91% of these youth are in unsupportive environments.

Who would this bill help? Certainly not any of our youth. Transgender youth will have a target on their backs, and those who seek to harm this community will place a target on any child they assume is transgender. Women who aren't transgender but have masculine features, such as Jay Rose last October, are already attacked by radical extremists who seek to eradicate this community. In the case of Jay Rose, she was verbally harassed and had security called on her in a Las Vegas public restroom on account of her short hair. How would these bathroom regulations be enforced? Do we have to check the genitalia of anyone who enters a public restroom? Or are we expected to start harassing anyone who could possibly be seen as transgender?

What purpose is there in banning gender-affirming care? What gives the legislature the authority to act against the suggestions of decades of medical research and the advice of nearly all modern doctors? Will this turn into the Nazi regime's burning of LGBTQ+ medical documents? The studies stated in the text of the bill are blatant misinformation that has been discredited by most credible medical associations such as the American Psychiatric Association, The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, and far more. It is a blatant lie that most transgender youth "grow out" of being transgender or that there are not "enough" studies of long term effects. As few as 1.4% of youth who undergo puberty blockers report regretting that

experience. A study from the AAP that tracked the identity of transgender youth over 5 years found that 97.5% of youth retained their transgender identity.

This bill is unconstitutional in its severe limitations of youth's freedoms. Youth are granted the right to express themselves in whatever way they feel is right via the First Amendment and their medical decisions are only the business of their families and medical providers. This bill seeks only to harm the most vulnerable members of our population and shows how trivial LGBTQ+ lives are in your eyes. I implore that you consider my testimony and what your constituents truly want from you and vote no on this draconian bill- our youth are depending on it. Thank you for your consideration.

Works Cited

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