

Opponent Testimony for Bill 68
Government Oversight Committee

December 3rd, 2023

Dear members of the Government Oversight Committee,

My name is Sarah Prochak (she/her). I am a parent, behavioral health professional (Board Certified Behavior Analyst), graduate student, and community member of Worthington. I oppose House Bill 68 due to the harmful and dangerous nature of the bill that would limit behavioral health clinicians from providing ethical care to their clients.

I have worked in the behavioral health field for almost 20 years and I worked for more than 8 years at Nationwide Children's Hospital. As a Board Certified Behavior Analyst and clinician working in the field of behavioral health, it is my duty to continually uphold my ethical obligations as a clinician in order to meet each of my client's needs - which includes supporting their gender identity and gender expression. I have witnessed the psychological, mental, and emotional distress that occurs when children's gender identities are not acknowledged and supported and the detrimental effect this can have on their ability to thrive in school, at home, and in their community. When children are not able to live as their full selves, which include their gender identity and expression, it can lead to harmful thoughts and both active and passive suicidal ideation.

Sports and athletics are a very positive and immensely influential part of many children/students' life, starting from elementary school all the way up to high school. It would be devastating for any child to have to choose between their gender identity and beloved sport and athleticism due to the discrimination and division outlined in HB68. There are non-binary and transgender students in school districts across Ohio who are forced to choose between their gender identity and engaging in athletics; choices that cisgender students do not have to make.

As a parent of two cisgender boys and a community member, I want ALL children to be able to play sports and participate on the team that honors their gender identity. I would welcome and encourage any transgender boy to play alongside my boys on their sports teams, and I would encourage and support my children to stand, play, and move in solidarity with them.

I ask that you please consider my testimony and vote no on House Bill 68.

Thank you.