



**Testimony of Molly Rampe Thomas, MSW, LISW-S  
Founder and CEO of JustChoice  
Senate Government Oversight Committee  
HB 68  
December 5, 2023**

Good day Chair Roegner, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson and members of the Senate Government Oversight Committee. My name is Molly Rampe Thomas and I am the founder of JustChoice, an all options center and adoption agency headquartered in Columbus, Ohio.

I am writing to express my grave concerns and unwavering opposition to House Bill 68, a proposed legislation that brazenly targets LGBTQ+ individuals, particularly our vulnerable transgender and gender-diverse *youth*. It is crucial to voice my concerns about the potential implications of this proposed legislation that targets LGBTQ+ students, especially trans and gender diverse students; healthcare providers; mental healthcare providers; family courts; and the Department of Health. As a social worker, organizational leader, concerned resident, friend, and mother in Ohio, I stand firmly against this bill's malicious intent to dismantle the very foundations of equality and compassion that our state upholds. This bill lacks the merit of any scientific evidence at the very least and lacks love at the very most. It isn't about honest concern, it is about hate.

One of the primary reasons for my opposition to House Bill 68 is the enduring negative effects it will have on transgender youth and their families; our communities. My opposition is based in science and love. Research shows that when trans youth are supported, they thrive. House Bill 68, devoid of any scientific backing and reeking of prejudice, seeks to erode the fundamental rights of LGBTQ+ individuals, jeopardizing their access to healthcare, mental health services, and fair treatment in family courts. This bill is not merely misguided; it is an affront to the very essence of humanity. This bill bans clinical best practice by prohibiting affirming health care and counseling to transgender youth. And we know this to be true through the many trans people we have touched in our work - from trans parents who have adopted, to trans teens we have hosted, to trans JustChoice adoptees. Our full acknowledgement of their identity helps us and them create a strong and vibrant community together. We fight for them because

we love them, and because their well being deeply matters to us as we would expect our representatives to feel the same.

All people deserve the right to make decisions for themselves, their identities and their bodies. They also have a right to work, play, and live in safe communities. Bills like the "Save Adolescents from Experimentation Act" harm not only them, but all of us. When one of our freedoms are in jeopardy, all of our freedoms are in jeopardy. As a social worker, I have witnessed firsthand the devastating impact that discrimination and prejudice can have on individuals and families. House Bill 68, if enacted, would exacerbate these harmful effects, creating an environment of fear, uncertainty, and exclusion for LGBTQ+ individuals.

As an organizational leader, I recognize the value of diversity and inclusion in fostering a thriving community. House Bill 68 stands in stark contrast to these principles, sending a message of intolerance and hostility that would stifle economic growth and hinder our state's progress.

As a concerned resident, I am appalled by the blatant disregard for human dignity and compassion that House Bill 68 embodies. This bill is not about protecting children; it is about perpetuating harmful stereotypes and fostering a climate of hate.

As a friend and mother, I am deeply troubled by the potential harm that House Bill 68 could inflict on our LGBTQ+ youth, denying them the love, acceptance, and support they deserve. This bill is an affront to our values as a society and a stain on our collective conscience.

I urge you, our elected representatives, to reject House Bill 68 wholeheartedly. Stand with the LGBTQ+ community, protect our youth, and uphold the principles of equality and compassion that our state has long embraced, and what the people of Ohio stand for.

I want to thank the committee for hearing my testimony, and am available if you have any further questions.

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