

I am Dr. Lis Regula, and I live in Columbus, Ohio. I firmly believe that if humans were meant to fly, we would have wings. I can laugh (and you can, too). I realize how funny it sounds for a grown man to fear flying, especially since flying is statistically far safer than driving because it requires more training and control than going. As someone with a fear of flight, when my daughter came out to me as someone who wanted to be a pilot, I had to do a lot of reflection and talk through my feelings. That's probably not the usage of "coming out" that you're used to, and yet I bet most of us have something in our young lives that we're afraid to tell our folks- be it a failing grade, not wanting to follow their footsteps in athletics, or dating someone we didn't think they'd approve of. Since her passion for flight has blossomed despite my fears, I have also had to help my daughter work through feelings as we learn what it takes to be a pilot and that she may not be able to do those things and follow her dream. As a parent, I love my child unconditionally, support her in her endeavors to thrive, and model what it means to be true to oneself. Oscar Wilde once said, "Be yourself; everyone else is already taken," and I know how important that is. Trying to be someone other than who I am has never turned out well for me, and most of us in this room can probably think of a time when following the crowd did not lead us in the right direction.

Considering that we are here in opposition to a bill that strips children like my daughter of medical care that helps them thrive – and all too often, simply survive- my fear of flying may sound like a metaphor. The funny thing is that it's not; it's a part of my life as a parent. We parents often think that we know better than our kids do and that they should listen to us. We're older and life experts, after all, right? Fortunately, that's not always true. Our kids teach us so much when we listen- whether that's new technology and trends, who they are as they grow into themselves, areas where we may have forgotten some things (hello, math homework!), or something else. Parenting, like teaching, is not just conveying knowledge but also being open to learning. Let's face it- the world changes, and while that can be scary, it is also amazing to see what we can do now that was not even a dream a hundred years ago. The Wright brothers would probably be amazed at how far their machines have come, literally and metaphorically.

In our house, we often lean on the phrase "Feelings aren't facts," not in a condescending "get over it" way, but in a "let's check this perspective" way. My fear of flying makes no logical sense today, yet it is natural. When my daughter came out as trans, I'll be honest: I had a moment where I was terrified, even though I am trans myself, and I know the relief that comes in living and being seen as who I am. My fear when she came out, however, was not that she was making a wrong choice or that she would regret anything. No, my fear was in losing her, as I have lost too many people in my life. Unlike my fear of flying, that fear is rooted in reality, unfortunately. Every year on Trans Day of Remembrance, we acknowledge the names and lives of trans people lost to hatred and violence. Or at least those names whom we're aware of. We also have considerable research showing the increased rates of suicide attempts and successes within the trans community, primarily when

those folks are not supported. When they do have supportive people in their lives, those rates drop to similar rates as their cis cohort members.

My daughter's friend group, like many young people today, have their struggles with depression, anxiety, and fear. They are also predominantly trans young women. This is not because one of them has "turned" the others trans, but because birds of a feather flock together, as they say. No one would bat an eye if my daughter and her friends were a group of young women. Treating her friend group differently because of who they are is the very definition of discrimination. Bills like HB 68 worsen those mental health conditions because they make those kids afraid of their health needs being ignored, anxious over being accosted in public, and depressed that they may never have the chance to be true to themselves.

HB 68 is a gross overreach of the government into parent's rights. Just like a pilot has to learn far more about their profession than I do as a lowly car driver, a doctor has to learn far more about their profession than any politician. Even more, a parent knows more about their child than any politician learns about that child. I've told you a little about my Vivian. I wish that I had time to fully explain how her face lights up when she plays airsoft, or how much hearing her laughter as she plays with her friends makes every day better for me, or how I enjoy showing off her art far more than she (in truly teenage form) enjoys me showing off her art.

Thankfully, my daughter will soon be of an age where this bill can't impact her directly. That is not the case for every kid in her shoes. As a lowly car driver, I would not dare to think I could tell a pilot how to do their job, even if that pilot is my daughter. I ask this body to please not put themselves and this bill in between the medical experts and parents who are helping kids to grow up healthy and happy. We love our kids unconditionally, even when we don't understand them, and this bill makes it harder for us to act on that love and make it harder for our kids to live authentic lives. Thank you for your time.