

December 4, 2023

Ohio Senate Government Oversight Committee
1 Capitol Square Columbus, OH 43215

RE: Opponent to HB 68

Chairwoman Roegner, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the committee:

My name is Allison Ritting and I am a resident of Columbus, Ohio. I am writing to voice my concern about a dangerous bill being heard in the Ohio Senate. If passed, House Bill 68 would be detrimental to the safety and wellbeing of LGBTQ+ youth and their families. As a member of the LGBTQ+ community and a pediatric healthcare provider, I believe that this bill is a direct threat to the mental and physical health of LGBTQ+ individuals.

This legislation includes provisions that deny healthcare to vulnerable youth, obligate public and private school officials to put students at risk, and penalize clinicians for providing support informed by the family and medical team. It is unlawful for any piece of legislation to impact a parent's ability to make the best choices when caring for the complex and dynamic needs of their child. House Bill 68 not only threatens the privacy of transgender and non-binary youth, but also their ability to seek gender-affirming care. This is a clear example of state-sanctioned discrimination against an already marginalized population and a violation of parental rights. The government should not be able to interfere in important healthcare decisions between parents and healthcare providers. We must protect children, including LGBTQ+ youth, and ensure that they have access to best-practice health treatment.

Additionally, House Bill 68 seeks to harm transgender girls and women by preventing participation in sports, and thereby increasing social isolation. Engagement in team sports contributes to many important aspects of childhood development, including physical, social, and emotional skills. As a pediatric healthcare provider specializing in childhood development, I have seen firsthand the value and positive impact of youth sports. I also speak from the perspective of a four-year NCAA collegiate athlete who has competed at the championship level. My athletic career has lent me invaluable experiences and everyone deserves access to such experiences, regardless of gender identity.

LGBTQ+ youth deserve to feel safe and supported by their communities. Everyone should have access to safe, evidence-based healthcare and the opportunity to build community in activities and sports without fear of being ostracized for gender identity. House Bill 68 sets a dangerous precedent that will encourage the stigmatization and isolation of LGBTQ+ youth. Therefore, I request that you do not support this bill and vote no if it comes up for a vote. Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony in opposition to House Bill 68.

Sincerely,

Allison Ritting

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