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Trans Allies Of Ohio

www.transalliesohio.org

MEDIA CONTACT:

TransAlliesOfOhio@gmail.com

Jeanne Ogden, Co-Founder

(614) 592-9866



Ohio House of Representatives' announced January 10 House Bill 68 Governor's VETO OVERRIDE VOTE throws Ohio parents of transgender youth back into turmoil as Trans Allies of Ohio scrambles to comfort and keep frightened families informed.

(COLUMBUS, Ohio) - Ohio families of transgender children are again planning their exodus from their Ohio homes in response to the Ohio House of Representatives' planned VETO OVERRIDE VOTE on January 10, 2024 for House Bill 68, which bans gender-affirming care for minors and bars all transgender girls, as young as kindergarten, from playing sports.

"I want them to know that I'm human and that I'm not some myth." – Parker Elswick (16)

Trans Allies of Ohio has provided [community, care, and comfort inside the Ohio Statehouse](#) for these families during every public hearing on this cutthroat, ill-advised piece of legislation. We have "viewer-discretion-advised" front row seats to the depth and breadth of harm, fear, and unwarranted shame caused by Ohio Republican lawmakers' laser focus on transgender children's private anatomy and intimate healthcare needs. Coming off warm holiday gatherings and hoping that 2024 would tender a General Assembly focused on the real needs of all Ohioans, this is a sucker punch to the entire state with their first act being an attack on youth.

"As a 14 year old, I shouldn't have to worry about when my rights are gonna 'disappear'. I should be worrying about school, my friends, or what I'll wear to a dance, not fighting to keep access to my healthcare." – Amity Jerina (14)

Governor DeWine listened with an open mind and uncommon humility to Ohio families, Ohio doctors, Ohio hospitals, and even the few out-of-state proponents flown in for hearings before deciding a veto was the only way to protect the lives of Ohio's transgender children. When explaining his reasoning, he [acknowledged](#) that *"there are rare times in the law—in other circumstances—where the State overrules the medical decisions made by the parents, I can think of no example where this is done, not only against the decision of the parents, but also against the medical judgment of the treating physician and the treating team of medical experts."*

Governor DeWine recognized that parents, and parents alone, are best equipped to make these difficult, complex healthcare decisions.

Gretchen Long, parent and Trans Allies member says, "I have two children with rare medical conditions and there is limited research on the medication for their exact conditions. We should be able to make decisions privately with our team of doctors for both children, not just one."

In contrast, Ohio House Republicans disregarded the expertise of all six Ohio children's hospitals, including Cincinnati Children's Hospital, ranked number one in the nation, Nationwide Children's, ranked number six, and Ohio's north coast jewel, Cleveland Clinic, along with medical and mental health experts, parents, trans children, and 40 medical organizations that endorse gender affirming care as the most effective and safe treatment for transgender youth.

"We just want to be left alone and live our lives." – Bradie Anderson (15)

The Ohio Assembly has presented the same core bill over and over for three years, wearing families, fellow lawmakers, and Ohioans down. Over 500 Ohioans' testimonies opposed H.B. 68 in both the House and Senate, outnumbering mostly out-of-state proponent testimony 7 to 1. Now the Assembly is eager to rush through a bill that makes parents feel powerless, exhausted, homeless, oppressed, and alone.

*"Ohio children are not protected by H.B. 68; they are summarily thrown off their treatment plans by business men, realtors, and Baptist preachers against medical advice and without the consent of their parents. How is this life-affirming? It's not, it's death-dealing," said The Rev. Alice Connor (parent and Trans Allies member), "We have talked about moving out of state as we can't imagine intentionally letting our child go through the pain and anguish of not being able to be their true self. **We love Ohio but Ohio does not love us.** Today it is my child, tomorrow it will be healthcare for seniors, and at this rate they'll be attacking interracial marriage by February."*

Trans Allies Of Ohio calls on everyone to stand up against this reckless government overreach. We need all allies to tell the Ohio Statehouse to stop bullying trans children. We stand for the freedom of all citizens and believe the most precious individuals, our youth, deserve the full expert care of doctors and parents which cannot happen when big government dictates healthcare.

– Trans Allies Of Ohio
www.transalliesohio.org

Trans Allies Of Ohio is a grassroots coalition of Ohio allies, transgender youth, and their families volunteering together to achieve fair treatment and equal opportunity for the Ohio transgender community.

WHAT WOULD AN OVERRIDE OF GOVERNOR DEWINE'S VETO OF [OHIO H.B. 68](#) DO?

- Enact a blanket ban on every type of gender-affirming care for transgender youth, with the exception of those Ohio residents who are already receiving gender-affirming medical care on the law's effective date. *Ohio laws are effective 90 days after they are signed.*
- Sharply limit the ability of medical professionals to provide Ohioans the best, medically accepted, treatment. This treatment is necessary for a small percentage of children experiencing severe gender dysphoria by [every major national and Ohio healthcare association and ALL 6 of Ohio's pediatric hospitals including Cincinnati Children's](#) (ranked #1 in the nation), Nationwide Children's (ranked #6) and the Cleveland Clinic.
- Deny consideration of certain parental rights related to gender-affirming care in court
- Commit Ohio to a polarizing, lengthy, resource-consuming legal process to defend the State's theft of a parent's right to seek medical care for their child, a right a [federal judge](#) in Idaho recently found to be "deeply rooted in our nation's history and traditions."
- Rob Ohio's transgender students in kindergarten through post-secondary education of the social, physical, and mental health benefits of joining their friends and classmates on sports teams.

WHAT IS GENDER-AFFIRMING MEDICAL CARE?

Every patient who walks through the door of a medical provider's office or hospital receives gender-affirming care. This simply means respect and medical treatment that is appropriate and necessary for a person's gender, from honoring a patient's preferred mode of address to supporting treatment options each patient needs.

In the context of H.B. 68, gender-affirming care is an umbrella term that includes a range of services that people receive to align their gender identity and body, including therapy, consultations with doctors, hormone therapy, medication, and surgery (which is reserved for those who are over 18).

H.B. 68 IS BAD FOR BUSINESS

1. 20% of the next generation's workforce identify as LGBTQ+. H.B. 68 makes it more difficult for employers to recruit the talent they need, thus making Ohio a less desirable place to do business(1).
2. Intel, a multinational technology company with extensive policies supporting trans employees and parents of trans kids, recently made a \$20 billion investment in Ohio, bringing 10,000 new jobs to the state.(2) This bill threatens members of their workforce and their ability to recruit employees.

H.B. 68 IS BAD FOR FAMILIES

1. Trans youth who receive gender-affirming care are 73% less likely to attempt suicide and 60% less likely to experience depression and report feelings of hopelessness about their future.(3)
2. H.B. 68 prohibits parents from accessing life-saving medical treatment for their children. Parents, transgender youth, and their doctors should decide the proper medical course of action, not lawmakers.
3. Passage of H.B. 68 will force Ohio families who believe this is the best medical care for their child to move out of the state, causing financial, housing, social, mental and physical health hardship.

H.B. 68 IS NOT WHAT THE PUBLIC WANTS

1. 76% of likely voters believe that the decision regarding access to care for transgender youth should rest with parents or medical practitioners.(4)

(1) Doherty, Erin. (2022). *The number of LGBTQ-identifying adults is soaring*. Axios.

<https://www.axios.com/2022/02/17/lgbtq-generation-z-gallup>

(2) Intel Press Team. (2023). *Intel Invests in Ohio*. Intel.

<https://www.intel.com/content/www/us/en/newsroom/resources/intel-invests-ohio.html#gs.1bwxg5>

(3) Tordoff DM, Wanta JW, Collin A, Stepney C, Inwards-Breland DJ, Ahrens K. *Mental Health Outcomes in Transgender and Nonbinary Youths Receiving Gender-Affirming Care*. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2022;5(2):e220978. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.0978

(4) Data for Progress' LGBTQ+ Issues Working Group. (2023). Democrats Should Stand Strong Against Anti-Trans Attacks in 2024 and Codify Medical Care Protections the Next Chance Get. Data For Progress.

<https://www.dataforprogress.org/insights/2023/11/17/democrats-should-stand-strong-against-anti-trans-attacks-in-2024-and-codify-medical-care-protections-the-next-chance-they-get>