



## Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 68

Dr. Ben Huelskamp

Chair Lipps, Vice Chair Stewart, Ranking Member Liston, and Honorable Members of the House Public Health Policy Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in opposition to House Bill 68, otherwise known as the “Enact Ohio Saving Adolescents from Experimentation (SAFE) Act.” My name is Dr. Ben Huelskamp and I’m the Executive Director of LOVEboldly, an Ohio faith-based nonprofit working to create spaces where LGBTQIA+ people can flourish in Christianity.

LOVEboldly’s opposition to the “SAFE Act”—which is anything, but safe—is rooted in three points: gender affirming care is logical; every major medical and scientific organization supports gender affirming care; and gender affirming care is a moral imperative.

**Gender affirming care is logical.** Though sensationalized in the media and made to be the bogeyman of countless conservative nightmares, gender affirming care is nothing more and nothing less than providing medical and psychological interventions and support to people—youth and adults—struggling to make sense of their gender identity. Gender affirming care for children is often social in nature and even medical interventions, such as puberty blockers, are completely reversible. For transgender children, gender affirming care is a slow, deliberate process through which children are allowed time to live into their true gender identity, whatever that may be.

**Gender affirming care is supported by every major medical and scientific organization.** The American Medical Association, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Counseling Association, the American Osteopathic Association, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association, the World Health Organization, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the US Department of Health and Human Services, and many other leading governmental and nongovernmental health organizations agree that gender affirming care is the optimal intervention for transgender patients of all ages.

**Gender affirming care is a moral imperative.** The LOVEboldly community looks to the Book of Genesis where God creates the earth and everything that dwells upon the earth. We see a God who creates in nuance and through spectrums. A God who creates not only night and day, but midday, midnight, dawn, and dusk. A God who created reptiles even though they are never mentioned in Genesis. A God who, yes, created male and female, but also created gender expansive people and transgender people. And God called them good. Therefore, the provision of gender affirming care is a moral imperative. Our faith compels us to speak up with all of our transgender siblings.

We urge you to reject HB68 here in the Public Health Policy Committee and not allow it to move forward in the legislative process.

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*Creating and developing spaces for LGBTQIA+ people to flourish in Christianity.*

30 E. College Ave., Westerville, OH 43081 | EIN: 81-1869501

www.loveboldly.net | admin@loveboldly.net | 859.904.8056