

Ohio Chapter

INCORPORATED IN OHIO

American Academy
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

May 24th, 2023

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Dear Chairman Lipps and Members of the House Public Health Policy Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding House Bill 68. I am submitting this letter on behalf of the nearly 3,000 members of the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. These dedicated health care providers are united in their concerns over this harmful legislation.

The consensus among health care providers is that gender-affirming care represents the best standard of care for transgender and gender-diverse youth. I recognize that a small number of practitioners disagree with this consensus, however our medical system allows for such disagreement. Parents are empowered to seek care from a trusted health care provider and may choose to receive care from a provider who does not support gender-affirming care. The relationship between health care providers and their patients and families is essential and legislation like HB 68 disrupts that relationship.

One of the most troubling comments that have been made by supporters of HB 68 concerns the role of informed consent. Just to be unequivocally clear, pediatricians must obtain parent consent before rendering any care to a minor patient. Children do not make these decisions, their parents do in consultation with a trusted health care provider. Pediatricians have an ethical and legal obligation to provide accurate and complete information to patients and their parents and they must make recommendations for treatment that is in the best interest of the patient.

In 2018, the American Academy of Pediatrics adopted a policy statement titled, "[Ensuring Comprehensive Care and Support for Transgender and Gender-Diverse Children and Adolescents](#)." This statement was reaffirmed in 2022 and represents the consensus among the more than 67,000 members of AAP nationwide. A copy of this statement is included with this testimony and provides a useful summary of best practices, standards of care, and citations for notable studies and resources.

It is important to note that gender-affirming care is not about forcing children down a certain path or attempting to change or solidify a gender expression or identity. In fact, AAP opposes conversion or reparative therapies and encourages pediatricians to use evidence-based and widely accepted standards of care. This is true for gender-affirming care and any other type of care.

In closing, I want to stress that my members deeply concerned over the rhetoric and accusations made by the bill sponsor and proponents. The Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics is the lead

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voice for child health advocacy and our members are deeply committed to caring for their patients. Any allegation to the contrary is not factual.

I urge you to oppose HB 68....

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melissa Wervey Arnold".

Melissa Wervey Arnold
Chief Executive Officer
Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

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