

## VETO Override on HB68

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in opposition to the Override of the Governor's Veto on House Bill 68.

When I decided to run for office, it was because my entire career has been focused on caring for women and educating people, whether it was a patient, a medical student or a resident. In running for office, I had the naive belief that I would be surrounded by other legislators who wanted to improve life in Ohio through thoughtful legislation that would make education more accessible or health care less expensive and more attainable. Whatever the issue was, I believed we were all here to listen and learn and create legislation that would move Ohio forward and help the majority of people. I knew that many health issues were being legislated and felt that it was important to represent experts and share that knowledge with those outside the medical profession.

What I didn't expect and what is truly disappointing and harmful is that so many legislators don't trust science and the hundreds of experts that have testified repeatedly on health issues from abortion to vaccines and now to gender affirming care. When I was preparing my comments, I ran across some of my testimony against HB454 from the last General Assembly, now known as HB68.

At that time this bill died in the last assembly. However, when world experts who testified this time along with the parents and kids who shared their personal private stories they were dismissed..

Why? Because of money given by radical christian groups to push an agenda that doesn't help a single family. Why? Because your Google search makes your knowledge equal to my 30 plus years in medicine. Is it because

politics is no longer about listening to your constituents as gerrymandering creates districts for the politician. Is it because we have all forgotten how to listen and learn from others and how to compromise and negotiate? Politics have become so divisive that we have the distinction of being the least productive assembly in 55 years!

Overriding a veto that was made after much deliberation and thought by the Governor shows the community how little we respect others and are only pushing a political agenda that appeals to a fringe of voters. Last year, the voters loudly and clearly showed us with overwhelming percentages that they don't trust the Statehouse in August and that they do want to have a say in how Ohio is governed.

HB68 is harmful to the next generation and does nothing to protect our youth. Statistics show that Ohio is growing older, and only in Columbus is our younger population increasing. I would say this is a direct result of the number of bills that have been proposed that hurt evidence based health care, public education including diversity, equality and inclusion and do nothing to improve the financial well being of our citizens.

Restrictive abortion laws in Ohio led to maternal deaths and having to travel to other states for abortion care. HB 68 will result in the same problem where people will have to travel extreme distances and suffer, both mentally and financially. HB68 is a bill that will lead to an increase in deaths, an increase in families having to leave Ohio to give their kids the best care possible, and an increase in wait times for mental health care as providers leave the state. Remember, half of our counties are maternity deserts, and the same types of problems will occur when these laws are passed regardless of whether it is from the Statehouse or from Executive order. Trans children and adults deserve

our empathy and understanding instead of this aggressive attack on their rights. N

If you are a corporation or university, how will you recruit the brightest and best to come to a state that is busy taking away rights from women and taking away health care from minors and is positioning itself on a slide to the bottom in regards to maternal and infant mortality?

My office has received over 1,500 emails against this bill and just over 200 emails in favor. We have received heartbreaking calls from transgender youth and adults who are scared, from parents who just want to see their children be their true, authentic selves, and from physicians and social workers who will be unable to provide their patients the care that they need. But the other side would have you believe that everyone agrees with them.

Trust science, the families, parents, patients and the experts who have testified repeatedly that gender affirming care is a continuum designed to help people achieve their authentic true self. It isn't up to the government to make these decisions and we need to stay out of the exam room. I urge a No vote to the override of the Veto on HB68.