

I rise with a heavy heart and mind. It took me a long time to write this speech because, honestly, what can I say that hasn't been said by every single children's hospital in this state, and every professional medical organization about why evidence-based gender affirming care is the best approach to treatment of young people facing issues and questions about gender – and about why this legislation will be incredibly harmful to all children in our state.

I have lost track of the number of times I have stood up to speak against bills targeting the LGBTQ+ community and transgender individuals – and I know, despite what it seems – I am not actually speaking to the majority party in this room, none of whom are especially interested in what I have to say on this matter, even though as a pediatrician I have the most experience here working with transgender children – but I am speaking to the people I represent, and the people who across the state who entrust us, in this body to make decisions that make things better in our society. I am speaking to the 58% of Ohioans who agreed in November that healthcare decisions should not be the business of the government and even the 63% of Ohioans who elected DeWine as Governor – And most importantly I am speaking to the thousands of Ohio citizens who reached out to share their personal private stories in order to keep an over-reaching government out of their healthcare, and prevent the state from stripping them of parental rights and bodily autonomy.

And so, to those people I say I see you, I am with you, I support you, I will continue to fight for you – and I am sorry. I am sorry

that we are here today to take away your rights, to target a small vulnerable group, and undermine health care for all children in Ohio. I am sorry that we could not stop this. I came here to try to improve healthcare, the help people to get access to the things they need to stay well. It crushes me that we continuously do the opposite, focusing all of our attention on bills that restrict access and care, ignoring the will of the people.

This bill is not about protecting anyone. We have had hundreds of hours of testimony on this bill. Across all this time there have only been a handful of people who have identified as having 'detransitioned' across the state and they are overwhelmingly against this bill. There are 6 transgender kids playing sports Do not tell me this bill is about protecting detransitioners in ohio - who clearly do not want or need or want this bill, or those other 400,000 kids playing sports from this huge threat. It is not, this is about ideology – and giving power to those who believe that transgender individuals should not have the same rights as the rest of us.

The impact of this bill cannot be overstated. Together with the executive orders Ohio will be the most restrictive state for transgender individuals of ANY age as we codify details of complex treatments into a law and strip adults of their bodily autonomy so that their individual health decisions must follow government mandates, rather than a nuanced discussions with their doctors and families. Children's hospital clinics that provide mental health support to those suffering with gender dysphoria will close as there will be no way to offer or even talk about

evidence-based therapy (if you remember there is a 'gag' rule for providers in this bill)

I truly struggle to comprehend the arrogance of people in this room who are voting to override this veto – to believe that somehow their knowledge and understanding of this issue is better than those who spend their entire lives in medical and mental health fields. Or to only think of the personal gain that they can garner from this vote rather than the impact on kids in Ohio. To speak about being against 'big government' but then insert the state government into personal and intimate aspects of people's lives.

Today is a dark day, and I know many are hurting and afraid. You are not alone – There is some hope. Over the last several months we have seen the power of activism at the ballot box. People have seen through misinformation and messaging to stand up strong for the right to make their own medical decisions. While we feel powerless now, in our state the power does not lay with these elected officials but rather the people of Ohio – and i (and the others in the Democratic caucus) will continue to fight with the people for you.

5 children's hospitals including the number one rated children's hospital in the country who unequivocally stated this bill would hurt children.

Any person who spends time with the 5 years ago my first floor speech I gave my background and qualifications. I do not think I have ever been inconsistent in my speeches or my votes. I am here to fight for people's health. Period. It isn't politics, or personal gain, it certainly isn't for the money.

People trust me with their lives, literally.