



May 25th, 2022

To: Chair Susan Manchester, Vice Chair Al Cutrona, Ranking Member Sedrick Denson and Members of the House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee

Good morning. I am Lisa Breedlove Chaffee, Director of Ohio Parents Rights In Education. We are a national organization dedicated to valuing students and empowering parents.

I am here to speak in favor of the Safe Act.

In 2009 I had weight loss surgery. It took me a year to get approved to have the surgery. I had to go through extensive psychiatric evaluation to get approved for the surgery. I had to analyze myself to understand why I ate so much that I weighed 300lbs. I discovered that I do have an endocrine disorder that causes weight gain but the most difficult thing I learned is that I ate to comfort myself while my mother was getting drunk, and my brother was using drugs. I ate to make my body ugly. I was molested by a family member at a young age. I was subconsciously trying to make myself so hideous that no one would ever want to touch me again. It was a vicious cycle. Understanding why I over ate was important for my weight loss surgery to be successful. Changing my body via surgery did not fix what was wrong with me psychologically. I suffer from depression. After having lost over 50lbs when I look in the mirror I still see myself as 300lbs, fat and ugly. I still hear the voices of the boy who bullied me horrifically in high school. I still hear self defeating thoughts in my mind telling me I am useless, less than human. I had the weight loss surgery in my late 30's. I am now 50. I still struggle with emotional eating. Surgery did not fix that.

I share this with you because we have become a nation that believes pills and surgery will fix what is wrong with us. We look to outside resources to make us happy, to make us whole. We look for a quick fix. We now have a generation of young people who are afflicted with normal pubescent angst. Theirs bodies are changing, and it is uncomfortable and at times down right disgusting-especially for girls. They are struggling to fit in. Just like every generation before them our kids want to belong, want to be validated and valued as individuals. They are seeking to find who they are. The last two years depression, drug abuse and suicide rates have sky rocketed across the board in our young people. It angers me that medical professionals and many teachers and school counselors are so quick to step in and start children on the path of changing who they are rather than asking the important questions such as "why do you feel this way?" or telling the children to talk with their parents.



I am sure you all remember what it was like to be a teenager. It is very difficult. Going through puberty is hard and is compounded by societal issues that tell our girls that if they aren't purely feminine, they are transgender, that tells our boys that aren't purely masculine they are transgender. There are some teachers who literally tell girls who say they are tomboys they are transgender. That happened to my friend's daughter.

Schools are usurping the authority of parents by telling students to lie to their parents about their struggle because "parents aren't safe." Parents are terrified to speak up for fear the schools will report them to child protective services if they do not affirm the child. And that is happening in Ohio.

Puberty blocking drugs, breast binders and surgery cannot fix depression, anxiety, gender dysphoria or any psychological issue. Science tells us that the human brain is not fully developed until the age of 25. Children do not have the capacity to analyze and understand the potential harmful effects of puberty blocking drugs or body altering surgery. They can't see past today and what they want right now.

As others have told you, none of these methods have been approved by the FDA. There is no scientific evidence that puberty blocking drugs or surgery help. And I might add that there is no harm caused by requiring children to wait until age 18 to start these procedures if they so choose.

We as parents are begging you to stop listening to the mob, listen to us. These are our children and it is our responsibility to raise them and care them and make medical decisions for them. Schools and no other individual or entity have the right to take away the authority of parents.

We need you to be the adults in the room and protect our children.