

What an Override of DeWine's Veto of HB 68 Could Mean for Transgender Medical Care in Ohio

Added by Eliza Sullivan on January 21, 2024.



On December 29th, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine vetoed [HB 68](#), which would have banned gender-affirming care for transgender people under 18. Shortly afterwards, on January 5th, Governor DeWine signed an [executive order](#) to “prohibit gender transition surgeries on anyone under the age of 18 in Ohio’s hospitals and health care facilities.”

It is uncommon for a governor to veto a bill sponsored by his own party. DeWine’s veto and subsequent executive order constitute a type of compromise; he didn’t want to sign the full bill, but did include its core idea in his executive order. HB 68 banned many types of gender-affirming care, while DeWine’s executive order banned only surgeries.

Despite DeWine’s compromise, Ohio Republicans are continuing to push for HB 68. The House of Representatives has already voted 65-28 to override the veto. Now, the override goes to the Senate, where it needs 20 votes to pass.

Both HB 68 and Governor DeWine’s executive order infringe on the rights of transgender Ohioans. The ACLU called [HB 68](#) “discriminatory” and said that “important medical decisions should remain between youths, their families, and medical providers – not our

politicians.” They referred to [DeWine’s executive order](#) as “a de facto ban on transgender care.”

Access to inclusive healthcare is critical for transgender people of all ages. HB 68 would prevent doctors from diagnosing and treating, in any way, children with gender dysphoria or similar conditions, without the consent of the parent. This could block transgender children from accessing necessary medical and mental health services. In addition, HB 68 would ban [puberty blocking hormones](#), which the [National Institute of Health](#) says “have been used safely for decades in children,” adding that “multiple professional societies now endorse pubertal blockade for youth with gender dysphoria.” In fact, the NIH says that “initiated early in puberty, the [puberty blocker] delays the development of irreversible pubertal changes and in some cases, avoids the need for subsequent surgery.”

HB 68 will prevent transgender youth in Ohio from accessing vital medical treatment. Transgender youth are at incredibly high risks for anxiety, depression, other mental health conditions, and suicide attempts. The [NIH](#) conducted a study on the effect that puberty blocking treatments have on the mental health of transgender minors and found that “gender-affirming medical interventions were associated with lower odds of depression and suicidality over 12 months.” Denying access to medical care for transgender youths will increase mental health issues in Ohio.

By continuing to push for this bill, even after a veto from the governor, Ohio Republicans are sending a clear message: they don’t care how safe or effective gender-affirming treatment is for transgender minors, they simply don’t want it to happen. They are happy to watch countless Ohioans suffer because of a lack of necessary medical treatment.

The Ohio Senate will likely vote on HB 68 on January 24th. If you feel strongly about this bill, I urge you to call your state congressman. To find who your congressman is, go to [this website](#) and enter your zip code.