

Tara Regan Patterson
House Bill 90 – The Miseducation and Misinformation Bill
Opponent Testimony
Ohio House Health Committee
June 4, 2019

Charmin Merrin, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Boyd, and Members of the House Health Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit my written testimony. My name is Tara Regan Patterson and I'm a life-long resident of Akron, Ohio. I have dedicated my career to working in the nonprofit sector at health and human services organizations. I am a mother of a 5 year old and a step mother of a 16 year old and a 20 year old. I am strongly opposed to House Bill 90.

I strongly believe that children need to begin learning at an early age about medically accurate, fact-based, LGBTQ inclusive sexual health education and also about healthy relationships and intimate partner violence. My 16 year old step-daughter received the bare minimum of sexual education while she was in eighth grade, which told her to come home and talk to her parents about it. Luckily for her and for us, we have always engaged in fact-based education with our children.

What we were not prepared for was when last year she had an ex-boyfriend who began stalking and harassing her virtually and in-person. The manipulation attempts he made on her were scary for us as parents but nearly traumatizing for her. If she and this boy had both received healthy relationship education in school, these incidences may have never happened. Please imagine for a moment that your 16 year old daughter calls you crying and terrified that someone she has told repeatedly that she does not want to see anymore and that he makes her uncomfortable has shown up at your home when he knows you are not there and that she does not know what to do. Imagine that after this fact, after police intervention, that the same boy has a mutual friend call your daughter to tell her he is in the hospital and he has hurt himself because of her. Now imagine if your daughter had gotten pregnant by this boy and he would have to be in her life forever because of a birth control failure. Luckily for her, this last part did not happen. Because she received medically accurate sexual health education at home, since her school did not offer it.

As my daughter begins kindergarten this fall, I will be an even more active and engaged parent. I will make sure that children in her school district receive the full range of comprehensive sexual health education, including information on birth control, abstinence, healthy relationships, and STD prevention. If Ohio does not make proper health education standards, health outcomes will plummet. If this does happen, hopefully parents like me will step up and step in where the schools and these regulations are failing our children and putting them in unnecessary harm.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote no on this harmful bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to share my written testimony.

Tara Regan Patterson
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