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To whom it may concern,

I am writing to urge you to vote in favor of H.B. 165, the Health Education Standards bill. As a Health educator with almost 20 years experience I can think of no reason why our students shouldn't have learning standards like every state in our Country.

Health education to me is the single most influential course our children may take in their education. What other course directly teaches our children to save lives; CPR, First Aid, Rescue Breathing. What other course deals with social and emotional issues that directly pertain to a students well being? What other course so directly affects the community as a Health class that discusses and educates students about the deadly effects of Heroin and Opioids?

In my nearly 20 years as an educator I have witnessed first hand the positive effects I have made in the classroom teaching my students curriculum that is above and beyond what is currently required by the State. I have helped students deal with family issues on mental health by discussing where they can get help, what symptoms to look for in their loved ones, what to do if they suspect someone is exhibiting the symptoms. As a child my own mother who suffered from Schizophrenia never received any help. Had my teachers taught me lessons on this disease maybe I could have gotten her the help she needed. Instead I watched my mother exhibit the classic signs of a person suffering from the disease; talking to herself, severe depression, completely withdrawn from society. Instead I received only the basic textbook instructions that so many districts follow.

One of the most critical lessons I teach is on Mental/Emotional health. Every year I have students write me a letter titled, "If You Really Knew Me...". In it they describe how a person who really knew them would know personal information that they are sometimes too scared to reveal. Students have shared with me that they were abused and are now in foster care. Children who were depressed because they don't like the way they look. Teens who cry themselves to sleep because their father or mother was incarcerated. The exercise acts like a therapy session to my kids who may have no one else to talk to. After reading their letters I offer feedback and words of encouragement. Each student thanked me for listening when no one would. Students have shared that my class saved them because they had someone to confide in. Currently Ohio requirements do not address the topic of emotional health. A

topic in my opinion that is incredibly needed in this day and age of school shootings, mass drug use, self-esteem issues and depression. Our students deserve the best from their teachers as well as their representatives in Columbus. Adding a standard on emotional health is a necessity.

My curriculum focuses on the CDC National Health Education Standards that I have adopted in my classroom as a guide to better educate our children. The curriculum deals with the whole child. Our children need to have the best in order to achieve excellence. Having standards that every district must follow will allow us all to develop the rigor and relevance for Health education that every state in our Country currently does.

Please I implore you to do the right thing and vote in favor of H.B. 165.

Yours in Education,

Aaron Merz

J.

If You Really Knew Me

If you really knew me you would know that I don't even know myself. I'm still discovering my ambitions, dreams, and thoughts. I'm very opinionated, controversial, and confused. I'm very compassionate and can see both sides of situation and often cannot make a decision. But at the same time I also feel very apathetic and couldn't care less for most things.

If you really knew me you understand why I prefer to be alone. You'd know that sometimes enjoy socializing, but only in moderation. I prefer to stick to myself because I can't find people that have the same values as me. I don't enjoy always enjoy being out in public, acting in a childish manner, or partying. I'd rather spend my time with adults rather than teens my own age. I crave long nights of silence. I'd rather lie in the dark, getting lost in my thoughts, drowning the rest of the world out rather than engage in a pointless small talk conversation.

If you really knew me you would know that I'm afraid for the future. Most of the population believes it's more important to know what's going in Snookie's life rather than be concerned and try to come up with solutions that will plague our very close future and I cannot wrap my mind around that. You'd know I dream about half the population being whipped out.

If you really knew me you'd know why I'm not an affection person. My entire childhood I fantasied about a bond with a parent or sibling. My aunt got custody of me basically immediately after I was born. Growing up with a disabled senior citizen limited my experiences with traditional family events. My mother suffers from schizophrenia which causes a lot of tension at home. You'd know that I don't open up easily because no one really cares. Everyone has an unsatisfying life in some way or another.

If you really knew me you'd know all the small details about me. You'd know that I consume food in caveman like manner. You'd know that I'm not afraid to go out in public without styling my hair, wearing makeup and a matching outfit because I don't feel the need to impress other people. You'd know that I absolutely cannot stand to hear a dog pant or listen to someone breathe. You'd know the way my mind spirals in a thousand directions you'd know that I'm not a quiet person; I tend to respond to things in a sarcastic but humorous way.