

Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 178

December 2022

Linda Harvey, President, Mission America, www.missionamerica.com

I submit this testimony in strong opposition to Senate Bill 178, which seeks to capture the oversight of education in Ohio within the executive branch. This is a dangerous and unwarranted concentration of influence in the administration, and leaves virtually no means of recourse for the public to have input.

I will present below some specifics that, with all due respect, show this Republican administration as well as previous Republican administrations (which have dominated Ohio's politics for the last 30 years) do not deserve this kind of power. They are already failing to defend the values of most Republican voters on education issues.

Certainly under a possible future Democratic Party administration, parents with strong Christian or conservative moral principles would see high risk behaviors and identities actively and proudly promoted to our kids, which is why this re-make of Ohio education oversight is highly risky.

Yet anti-family, anti-Christian efforts are already well-established, evidenced by the current work of the Ohio Department of Education. For instance, "LGBTQ" behaviors and identities for students and teachers are specifically named in numerous ODE programs. These should all be eliminated. Homosexuality and gender confusion practices are high risk for youth and not inborn (research has failed to demonstrate the "born that way" claim). Millions of Ohio families are furious when the behaviors and identities of homosexuality and gender confusion are actively promoted as worthwhile, low risk and normal to Ohio children, or proudly lauded by their teachers.

One would think that a Republican administration would dial back that kind of leftist activism within the ODE. That has not happened. You've had years to do this, either through your administrative influence or your eight appointed OBOE members. Why have you not prevented this risk to children? And why should we give this Republican administration more power to disappoint and betray Republican families even further?

Here are a few disturbing examples. Under [Project AWARE](#), a mental health program administered by ODE, the [Trevor Project](#) appears as a resource for "LGBTQ" youth. Quick exit keyboard instructions are given to initial youth visitors to this high-risk, anti-parent, blatantly discriminatory site. When a troubled teen logs on to the Trevor site, they learn it's where they can "explore their gender or sexuality in an affirming place." Trevor is in reality a homosexual activist website which advises troubled youth that entering a homosexual life or attempting to change sexual identity are safe and normal, and that their parents are wrong if they object. Ohio children should not be misled and Ohio parents should not be undermined in this insidious, unhealthy manner.

Trevor Project hosts [Trevor Space](#), featuring unmonitored chat rooms. Adults can easily enter chat areas and gain access to troubled youth. Why not just post a sign, “Sex traffickers welcome”?

Trevor Project and “Trans Line” are both listed as worthy resources by the [Ohio School Safety Center](#). These activist groups hold positions that pose an imminent threat to children. They claim “support” for youth and are allowed respectable inclusion on the ODE site by this Republican administration, yet are a red flag for emotionally vulnerable teens.

ODE adopted [“social emotional learning”](#) as the focus of its strategic plan in 2019. Most SEL vendors promote acceptance of homosexual behavior and gender confusion as part of “self-awareness, “social awareness” or “relationship skills” competencies.

And this administration and ODE support school-based health clinics, even though such clinics are well-known by the pro-life community to be an access point for contraceptives for underage minors, even without parental consent, as well as referral for abortion. [In the ODE position paper on school-based health clinics on the website](#), “Higher contraceptive use among females” is listed prominently as a benefit for students.

Yet Ohio has a law that schools are to encourage abstinence until marriage (ORC 3313.6011). Is the current ODE, under a Republican administration, exempt from following Ohio law? This is what’s happening now. Why should we expect improvement under a new education empire?

There’s another deeply disturbing issue. The blatant discrimination in favor of every faith alternative except Christianity is accelerating and frankly, believing families in Ohio are sick of it. On an ODE website with recommendations to alleviate trauma in the school setting, the highly questionable practice of [“mindfulness” is recommended](#):

Mindfulness: Facilitate activities that teach skills like mindfulness. Breathing exercises, yoga or meditation can be taught and practiced as a standalone lesson or incorporated as part of another lesson. Practice these skills and re-teach as necessary.

Mindfulness and yoga are Eastern occult practices (it’s not just “breathing”). This goes far outside stress relief into sketchy religious practices. Several years ago, a [group of northern Ohio clergy](#) warned about yoga in 39 Ohio school districts. So, if we are allowing blatant religious practices, where is a recommendation for PRAYER? Under a Republican administration, surely someone could have made sure ALL viewpoints were represented.

Please discard the plans for a non-representative Ohio education bureaucracy. There are no good reasons to go this direction.