

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Miller, and members of the House Higher Education Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is James Vacca. I am a student at Columbus State Community College, a professional in the human services field, and a member of the LGBTQ+ community. I am strongly opposed to Senate Bill 83 and its companion bill in the Ohio House.

This legislation is an attack on my community, specifically transgender and gender diverse youths. It is an outrageous intrusion by the state into the private lives of individuals for no good reason. By willfully ignoring the distinction between biological sex and gender, as well as insisting on viewing these concepts as binary rather than a spectrum, this bill ignores the dedicated work of researchers and scientists across many fields.

The overwhelming majority of medical authorities agree that providing gender-affirming care and socialization to gender diverse youths is beneficial, life-saving, and promotes positive health and wellness outcomes. By making these supports stop at the athletics department, this bill seeks to force gender diverse youth out of school sports. This is discrimination at its worst, mandating separate but equal even though we know that separate is never equal.

Not only that, but by using the remediation tool of the private right of action instead of allowing for civil complaints or a more formalized complaint structure, this bill puts schools and youths at the mercy of anyone with enough time and resources to level such actions. This bill will force gender diverse youth to live in fear and isolation in this state.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful and dangerous bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.