

HB 183 is not only a harmful, discriminatory bill, but it addresses a problem school districts do not have. Students are safer, not because we restrict their access, but because we create opportunities for learning and understanding. There is simply no evidence to support the idea that students are at risk when transgender and gender non-conforming students use the bathroom aligned with their gender identity. There IS evidence, however, that this kind of anti-trans legislation, and its discriminatory messaging, is directly linked to the overwhelming statistics of anxiety, gender dysphoria, and suicidality among transgender youth. Schools should be a place of welcoming support; bills like this do nothing but promote fear, harassment, and an environment that is completely uncondusive to learning. Transgender and gender non-conforming people are already subjected to bullying and harassment. This bill sends the message that some students, simply by virtue of how they look and define themselves, are dangerous and unwelcome. Transgender and gender non-conforming young people also already face higher rates of family rejection and homelessness, mental health issues and suicidality, and they already are more likely to be denied work and housing. This bill punishes them just for living their lives and promotes a kind of intrusive police state, where students will have to carry their birth certificates with them wherever they go, just to use the bathroom. It promotes a culture of fear and discrimination and is completely unacceptable for all the students of Ohio who deserve to learn in an atmosphere of acceptance and support.

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