



Good morning Chair Young, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Miller and members of the House Higher Education Committee. My name is Beryl Brown Piccolantonio. I have the incredible honor of serving as Board President of the Gahanna-Jefferson school board, and I am here today speaking on behalf of our Board to testify in opposition to House Bill 183.

We believe we were elected to make sure that every single student in our school district receives the best possible education. Research shows that students learn best when they feel like they are part of their community, have relationships with peers and adults, when they feel seen and accepted for who they are - when they feel a sense of belonging. We believe locally elected board members are in the best position to ensure that school district staff is making sure every student feels a sense of belonging so that they can learn to their fullest potential and become contributing members of our community.

Our communities in Ohio are each unique and the beauty of having locally elected school boards is that there is a governing board for each school district who is accountable for hiring leaders and setting policy in order to provide what is needed in our communities. We look to the state and federal government to provide needed funding that helps make service possible, but we do not need the legislature to help us determine district policy or guidelines.

We are very concerned about how enforcing this legislation would hurt some of our most marginalized and vulnerable students and we are very concerned about how enforcing this legislation would impact our staff who are already under significant pressure and stress.

We also have concern about the language contained in House Bill 183 because the words alone are harmful to students - students we serve and care about. We are disappointed that members of this body would spend any time at all writing or discussing legislation like this when, quite frankly, our children need all of us now more than ever to focus on addressing their needs. They need us to make sure they are fed, clothed, warm, safe, educated and loved. They need us to work together on our shared goal of serving all students rather than adding to the distracting and divisive dialogue plaguing our meetings and news.



# Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools

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We must take a step back and focus on the fact that we are all public servants elected to serve our constituents by providing children with the best public education. With that as our guiding principle, we urge you to **not** move this legislation out of this committee.

Thank you for allowing me to share my Board's thoughts about this proposed legislation. And, thank you all for your dedication and service. I'm happy to answer any questions you might have.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Beryl Brown Piccolantonio".

Beryl Brown Piccolantonio

President, Gahanna-Jefferson school board

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daphne Moehring".

Daphne Moehring

Vice President, Gahanna-Jefferson school board

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kara M. Coates".

Member, Gahanna-Jefferson school board

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sue Horn".

Sue Horn

Member, Gahanna-Jefferson school board

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dion Manley".

Dion Manley

Member, Gahanna-Jefferson school board