

Opponent Testimony for House Bill 183
Dr. Nicolas Shannon Savard
Higher Education Committee
October 11, 2023

Chairman Young, Representatives Bird and Lear, and Members of Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Dr. Nicolas Shannon Savard. I am a graduate of The Ohio State University. I worked as an instructor there while completing my doctoral studies, before taking a teaching appointment at Case Western Reserve University. I also happen to be transgender. I am not here to argue for my right, nor my LGBTQ students' rights, to safely use the bathroom at school. That ought to be a given, and quite frankly, I am tired of having to make the case for our humanity to this legislature. I will use my time today to address a different concern regarding the practical implications of this policy. As such I believe the Higher Education Committee should note, this proposed policy shows little awareness of day-to-day life on college campuses.

Unlike, K-12 schools, universities typically do not designate separate restroom or locker room facilities for students and faculty. This makes the clause about the possibility to accommodate individual students by allowing supervised access to faculty restrooms irrelevant. Further, many buildings on college campuses don't have any single occupancy restrooms at all. Given that under this policy I, as a member of the female sex as per my birth certificate, would be prohibited from using the men's restroom where I teach, and 1. some semesters, this is up to three different buildings in addition to my office, 2. my presence in women's restrooms is likely to cause discomfort for others, since policies like this one stoke fear about men in women's bathrooms—I have some logistical questions:

Who should I clear my bathroom plans with? My department chair, the facilities manager for each building? Or would this fall under the purview of Human Resources?

Which offices will need to have my birth certificate on file? Should I keep a copy on me for when I need to use the restroom? Since my state ID and birth certificate don't match, should I also carry the court order for my legal name change?

Will the university be required to accommodate my request to only teach in buildings with a single occupancy bathroom or changes to my course schedule to accommodate a 20-minute roundtrip walk to the nearest building that has one?

Will you be allocating funding for either the number of administrators it will take to regulate and coordinate bathroom access? Will you be allocating funding for facility updates to add single occupancy restrooms to all campus buildings?

As an educator and transgender Ohioan, please strongly consider my testimony opposing HB 183 and vote NO on this bill. Moving forward, I urge all members of this committee to use their time more judiciously in addressing the well-documented, far more pressing challenges facing colleges and universities in this state.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any additional questions or provide input as needed. You may reach me by email at nicolas@drnssavard.com.

Thank you,

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Nicolas Shannon Savard
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