

Testimony opposing HB 183.

My name is Jennifer Quigley. I reside at 370 S. Fifth St. Columbus Ohio 43215.
I am from Columbus, Ohio.

I'm here to stand up for the LGBTQ+ community, including students who do not have the support of the community and/or their families.

This proposal of this bill greatly affects myself as well as my family. My transgender son decided to take college classes through the state funded college credit plus program because he didn't feel accepted in his own high school. He, like many other transgender and non-binary students, was bullied in a high school school bathroom. I have seen the devastating impact this has had on him, everytime he uses a public facility. It's heartbreaking to see someone suffer for being true to themselves.

My son would like to remain in Ohio and attend college here. If this bill is passed, it would truly make it impossible for him to pursue his dreams of studying in this state. This bill could potentially punish students who wish to come from out of state to study at our many well-renowned universities, even as adult graduate students look to gain employment here. Local companies will face the choice of supporting or rejecting this bill, and may eventually take their business out of state, driving economic growth elsewhere.

This implementation of this bill directly affects the mental and physical health of students. Many individuals of the LGBTQ+ community restrict their intake of liquids or food to get through the day, in order to limit their use of public restrooms. The mental health effects of this bill amplifies anxiety and fear that is already placed on these students. This restriction of bathroom use may compound anxiety of being accepted in public and heighten depression and mental health issues within this community.

This bill, if passed, places identifying factors to use a bathroom or locker room as subjective. Someone who is not masculine or feminine enough, is then asked to produce a document that not only violates their privacy but their dignity. The fact is transgender and non-binary individuals have been using bathrooms and locker rooms for decades without any issue. This bill directly discriminates against people on the basis of sex identity and gender expression. The Courts of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit and Seventh Circuit rule that school policies banning bathroom access consistent with a transgender student's gender identity can violate Title IX.

There is a much bigger picture to address: This nation is still battling the right to equal pay, fair and accessible housing, affordable healthcare and equal rights: important issues that have plagued our nation for way too long. Let's face it. This bill doesn't protect anyone's privacy, in fact it violates everyone's privacy. It would be impossible to regulate as a law, creating a more rigid identification process than the right to vote.

I'm asking to please consider the rights of every student deserving of an education in this state, the dream this country has set the standard for, by providing an inclusive place to learn-the main focus of education in this state. Turning a learning environment into a political battlefield isn't the answer.