

Opponent Testimony for Higher Education Committee HB 183

Wednesday October 11, 2023

Mrs. Christa Fine and Mr. Les Fine

Chair Young, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Miller and members of the Ohio House
Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing us to submit written testimony in opposition to House Bill 183 today.

We are writing to voice our strong objection to the proposed HB183, which would bar transgender individuals from using restrooms and locker rooms in Ohio schools and colleges corresponding to their gender identity. This bill would restrict transgender individuals' rights and freedoms in Ohio schools by restricting access to bathrooms and locker rooms only to students with their gender assigned to them at birth (proven via birth certificate). In addition, this law would also restrict transgender rights by prohibiting a member of the female biological sex to share overnight accommodations with a member of the male biological sex and vice versa as relating to overnight field trips and athletic competitions. A number of Ohio schools have allowed and are allowing transgender students to use communal restrooms consistent with their gender identity without problem. In fact, the August 23, 2023 decision by Federal Judge Newman regarding the Bethel Local School District upholds the transgender inclusive restroom policy which allows transgender students to use communal restrooms consistent with their gender identity. The HB183 bill which would ban transgender individuals from bathrooms consistent with their gender identity runs counter to this federal decision.

We have read testimony from the sponsors of HB 183, Representatives Beth Lear and Adam Bird. Many of their statements in support of HB183 are totally false and uninformed. Just one example given by Adam Bird is that girls have been assaulted by transgender individuals in girls bathrooms. That is completely untrue. Representative Beth Lear invoked the Bible among her reasons for sponsoring HB183. She should remember that the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights provides for separation of church and state. We could go on, but their statements are counter to federal and state laws and demonstrate their real objections are to restrict the

rights of transgender individuals in general, not just those delineated in HB183. This bill would only be the start.

We, like many of our family and friends throughout Ohio, have voted Republican for many years until the Republican Party started promulgating laws like this and many other anti-democratic laws. The majority of us no longer vote Republican and will not until it ceases its autocratic approach.

We beseech you to please vote NO on this dangerous, undemocratic and illegal bill.