

***Opponent Testimony for Higher Education Committee HB 183***

***Wednesday, October 11, 2023***

***Greg Martin***

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

Thank you for the opportunity to present the following testimony regarding HB 183. As background, I am a 61 year old straight white male. I attended Catholic schools – all in Ohio from kindergarten through my graduation from John Carroll. I have historically voted Republican because the Republican party I used to know focused on big picture things like fiscal responsibility and individual rights and freedoms. I have 5 children and 3 step children. One of my children is transgender. It's not something she chose – it's just who she is. And she should have the same rights and freedoms that her siblings and step siblings have and that you and I have. Among the most basic of these is the ability to go to the bathroom.

Those who support a ban on transgender people using the bathroom that aligns with their gender identity argue that it is necessary to protect the privacy and safety of others. However, there are several arguments against such a ban.

Firstly, it is important to recognize that transgender people face significant discrimination and harassment in their daily lives. Denying them access to public restrooms that align with their gender identity only serves to further stigmatize and marginalize them.

Secondly, there is no evidence to suggest that allowing transgender people to use the bathroom that aligns with their gender identity poses any threat to others. In fact, research has shown that allowing transgender people to use the bathroom of their choice does not increase the risk of sexual assault or harassment. When my daughter goes to the bathroom she walks in, goes to a private stall, comes out, washes her hands and leaves. It is impossible for me to see how that is a threat. Much less pornography.

Thirdly, it is important to recognize that transgender people are not seeking special treatment, but rather ***equal treatment***. Denying them access to public restrooms that align with their gender identity is a form of discrimination and violates their basic human rights.

Finally, it is important to recognize that transgender people are not the only ones who benefit from allowing them to use the bathroom of their choice. Parents with young children, elderly individuals who require assistance from caregivers, and people with disabilities who require accessible facilities all benefit from having more inclusive restroom policies.

In conclusion, there are several compelling arguments against a trans bathroom ban. Denying transgender people access to public restrooms that align with their gender

identity only serves to further stigmatize and marginalize them, while providing no benefits in terms of safety or privacy for others. Please do the right thing and don't let HB 183 get beyond this Committee.