

**Opponent Testimony for HB 183**  
**House Higher Education Committee**  
**October 11, 2023**

**Heather Russell Parent of a Transgender Child**  
**Ohio Parent**

Chair Tom Young, Vice Chair Gayle Manning, Ranking Member Joseph A. Miller III, and members of the House Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Heather Russell and my pronouns are she/her.

I am a parent in Warren County and have a transgender daughter. I am writing to oppose HB183, specifically the portion to enact sections 3319.90 and 3345.9.0

During my daughter's high school years she was supported by her school district, which had established guidelines for transgender kids and it wasn't to isolate and separate them with separate facilities. It was to include them with their peers of their identified gender. She now attends college at Ohio University, which also has an extremely supportive campus with set guidelines with inclusive bathrooms as well as dorms and locker rooms. Allowing her to worry about her grades instead of where to pee like most other students.

In the US, adults 18 - 22 years of age, 8% consider themselves non-binary or transgender. This is projected to increase in the future, which means more kids going through elementary, middle and high school will also be non-binary or transgender. What does this mean if this bill passes? I can tell you. I have an older son that goes to college in Florida. Florida passed a different type of bathroom bill making it a misdemeanor if someone asks someone to leave a bathroom they think they don't belong in. If the person who is asked to leave happens to have a weapon in their possession (Florida is an open carry state) it becomes a felony. My daughter would not come to Florida to help her brother move or to come visit because she didn't feel safe. This means people will not want to raise their kids here because their kids won't feel safe and they will feel "othered". This means those future kids when they enter the workforce will not want to work in Ohio because they won't feel safe and will feel "othered".

I am opposed to HB183, specifically the portion to enact sections 3319.90 and 3345.9.0 because of the negative impact it will have on the safety and mental health of our non-binary and transgender youth.

**I plead with you to listen and take into consideration the testimonies you hear today to not enact sections 3319.90 and 3345.9.0 which doesn't add any value or safety for anyone and puts undue burden on schools and students. It in fact creates an unsafe environment for our non-binary and transgender kids.**

Thank you.