

October 11, 2023
Testimony of Delia M. Sosa, MS, MD Candidate
House Bill 183

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Miller, and members of the House Higher Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in opposition to House Bill 183. My name is Delia Sosa. I am a medical student in the state of Ohio, and I have a medical condition as a direct result of a policy such as HB 183.

As a child and then as a teenager, I attended two private religious schools which, although offering me an invaluable education, gave teachers the discretion of whether or not we should be allowed to use the restroom during class time. I had teachers who refused to let any of us use the bathroom, and on multiple occasions, I was told that if I went to the bathroom during the school day, I would hinder not only my learning, but my chances of succeeding in college because “they don’t let you go to the bathroom in college”. So, I held it. For hours on end, I would sit in discomfort and eventually sharp pain from not being able to use the restroom. This year, I was diagnosed with a prolapsed bladder caused in part by holding my urine for too long. (For clarification: a prolapsed bladder refers to the bladder extending into pelvic/abdominal spaces which it is not supposed to.) When we hold our urine for too long, we run the risk of complications such as bladder prolapse, urinary tract infections, kidney infections, incontinence, etc. This is what happened to me, and what will likely happen to the transgender youth impacted by HB 183.

House Bill 183 holds the potential to harm so many of Ohio’s children the way I was harmed as a child. I did not have the language as a child to explain that I am transgender, but I did have the language to explain that I am gay. I was bullied for it in the girls’ bathroom at my middle school, the way so many LGBTQ+ youth are.

Forcing transgender students to use the bathroom which corresponds to “either the male biological sex or the female biological sex” as designated on their birth certificates is not only harmful, it is biologically and medically inaccurate. What happens to the intersex kids with ambiguous reproductive organs or differences in X and Y chromosomes who have an “X” on their birth certificate? What happens to the transgender kids who get bullied in the bathroom which aligns with their designated birth sex because they don’t look like the other people in that bathroom? What are you going to tell their families when they land in the emergency room for a kidney infection which is progressing to septic shock? What will you say to transgender adults when their bladder ends up in parts of their body it shouldn’t be because they held it for too long, too many times? What are you going to say to these kids and teenagers when the bullying gets so bad they’re afraid to go to school?

It’s scary to me that the Ohio legislature is more obsessed with what’s in our underwear than protecting kids like me who are harmed by policies like HB 183. I urge you not to pass this bill. Do it for the kids who just want to go to the bathroom. That’s all I wanted.