

October 9, 2023

Dear Ohio House Higher Education Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 183, which is under consideration. If passed, this bill would have serious consequences and negatively impact the transgender community and the entire population of Ohio. As a mother of a transgender son, I believe that it is the duty of the government to take care of the safety of all people, especially those most marginalized by society. This bill stands to create additional barriers that cause harm or further ostracize people for their differences.

I urge you to vote against HB 183 for the following reasons:

1. **Violation of Civil Rights**: First, this bill infringes upon the civil rights of transgender individuals by discriminating against them based on their gender identity. It sends a message that they are not entitled to the same rights and protections as their cisgender counterparts, which is both unfair and unconstitutional.
2. **Lack of Evidence**: There is no concrete evidence to suggest that allowing transgender individuals to use restrooms that align with their gender identity poses any harm or risk to others. Numerous states and localities have implemented transgender-inclusive policies without incident.
3. **Encouragement of Discrimination**: As experience has shown, when transgender people are targeted, no one is safe. This bill would most likely empower individuals to challenge and police gender identities of those using public facilities, including cisgender people. Such an environment is unwelcoming, and it fosters division, fear, and anger within our communities. Transgender people simply want the same access, opportunities, respect, and dignity that anyone would want. Going to the bathroom where they are most comfortable is frankly none of our business, not to mention the enforcement challenges this will create or the increased suspicion, paranoia, and harassment for anyone who may not fit into typical gender roles. This would harm all children and people in our schools and universities. Will you start requiring that our children have to show their birth certificate first, or do you plan to designate someone to check students' genitalia before they are allowed to use the bathroom? If you give this one moment of thought, you would see that it is clearly invasive and a misguided and quite disturbing use of your time and power.
4. **Economic Consequences**: Bills like HB 183 can have detrimental economic consequences for Ohio. Businesses, tourists, and organizations may choose to boycott or relocate due to perceived discrimination, resulting in lost revenue for Ohio. We need to encourage people

and businesses to come to our state, and by enacting discriminatory legislation, many people would ra

5. **Legal Challenges:** Enacting this legislation could lead to costly legal challenges for Ohio, which diverts resources away from more important issues. Numerous courts have already ruled against similar bills on the grounds of discrimination.

In conclusion, I strongly urge you to vote against HB 183. Instead of promoting exclusion and discrimination, let us focus on fostering a state that values inclusivity and equitable treatment for all. Please stand on the side of freedom, economic wisdom, and insight by rejecting HB 183 and working toward a better Ohio for us all.

Regards,

Erin A. Staebler