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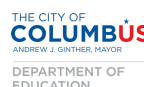
Ohio House Higher Education Committee  
1 Capitol Square Columbus, OH 43215

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Miller and members of the Ohio House Higher Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to House Bill 6. My name is Mallory Golski, I use she/her pronouns and I'm the civic engagement and advocacy manager for Kaleidoscope Youth Center, Ohio's largest and longest standing organization serving and supporting LGBTQIA+ youth and young adults, ages 12-24.

First, I'd like to wish you all a happy National Coming Out Day! I urge all of the LGBTQIA+ folks – especially youth – who are tuning in to this hearing to remember to hold some space today for queer and trans joy in your life. That alone is worth so much more than the hate provoked by the discriminatory legislation we're speaking about today.

You all have heard me talk about my experiences as a swim coach when I came here to testify against H.B. 6 earlier this year. As a coach, I have a pretty relaxed bathroom policy – unless I can tell that a swimmer is trying to use the bathroom as an excuse to get out of a tough workout, I am fine with letting them hop out of the water to use the restroom when they need to, no questions asked. Because, really, who am I to tell someone, "No, you can hold it for another half hour until I'm done instructing," which is a response they often hear in school. This policy comes as a relief to most of my swimmers – literally! – but especially for one. This swimmer is 13 years old and nonbinary, so they use they/them pronouns. As I've gathered over the last two years of knowing them, it's not uncommon for this swimmer to feel fatigued – or even dizzy, at times – during practice because they're dehydrated. Despite my persistent advice for this swimmer to drink more water throughout the day so they aren't literally putting themselves in danger, they often remind me that the reason why they don't drink more water isn't because they aren't thirsty or don't realize that they need more water – it's because they don't feel comfortable or safe in the gendered restrooms at school.

One day, last year, this swimmer came to practice visibly upset, so I asked them what was up. They proceeded to tell me about how they had gotten kicked out of the boy's restroom that day



at school. *The boy's?!* I wondered, knowing that this swimmer was, in fact, assigned male at birth. It turns out, on that day, they had been wearing a more feminine outfit, with flare jeans, a red bandana and funky earrings. While washing their hands at the sink, other people in the restroom confronted this young person, saying that they didn't belong in the boy's restroom. The boys kicked them out, confirming my swimmer's suspicion that they weren't safe in *either* gendered restroom at school.

Under this legislation, this kind of experience will not only become more common – it will be the requirement. We shouldn't be teaching kids that it's okay to make judgements and single out their peers because of how they look or dress, let alone when doing so will lead to discrimination that's embarrassing at best and could result in serious health complications at worst.

If supporters of this bill are so concerned about obscenities, I have to wonder why they'd introduce a bill that would require all of us – proponents and opponents alike – to come up here and talk about kids... going to the bathroom. In fact, all of the young people I've talked to about this bill have responded similarly. The vast majority of those who spoke up called the bill some variation of "silly," "ridiculous," or "stupid," while pointing out the much bigger issues there are to worry about in Ohio. They worried about how this policy would be enforced, and where their intersex peers would fit into the equation. Here is more of what KYC youth had to say:

*"Why are you focusing on kids peeing, honestly? It's none of your business. Genuinely, it feels like we're being blamed for things that aren't our fault. It feels like we're being used as a scapegoat to distract from the problems that are really happening. You're taking away our healthcare and you're taking away our right to be fucking people. I should be able to pee where I want."* – **KYC Youth**

*"The bill is stupid. It's like breaking privacy. It shouldn't be about someone's gender. It's just a bathroom. It's not even a good bathroom if you're in school. It's just a bathroom."* – **KYC Youth**

*"I think that anyone who disagrees with trans people being able to use the bathroom that makes them feel uncomfortable and unsafe should have to use a bathroom that makes you feel uncomfortable and safe so you can see how it feels. Why are you so worried about where people choose to pee or change for gym?"* – **KYC Youth**

*"I feel like this bill is really hard to enforce because you can't really tell a lot of people's biological sex or gender just by looking at them. A lot of binary trans people who have socially and/or medically transitioned look like the gender they identify as, so it would be kind of awkward if a*



*trans woman who fully passes is walking into a men's restroom. This could make them get beaten up or possibly worse. Even if they don't pass it would just be really uncomfortable to be forced to go into a restroom that causes them dysphoria. With nonbinary people, they wouldn't have a restroom to go to. I feel like there should be just a gender neutral bathroom for everyone then everyone could just go into a stall and then use the same sink area. Trans people should be able to choose which bathroom makes them most comfortable because it's already really scary to use a gendered bathroom depending if you're looking more masculine or feminine that day. As a trans man, I feel like I wouldn't belong in a women's restroom."* – **KYC Youth**

Transgender and nonbinary youth deserve to feel comfortable while on overnight field trips, in dorm rooms and in locker rooms, and they certainly deserve to go to the bathroom in peace. Please vote no on HB 183 and any other legislation that would discriminate against transgender Ohioans.

