

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: 10/10/2023 (submitted) for 10/11/2023 Hearing

Name: Amanda Fisher

Are you representing: Yourself Organization

Organization (If Applicable): _____

Position/Title: _____

Address: 370 S 5th St.

City: Columbus State: OH Zip: 43215

Best Contact Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): House Bill 183

Specific Issue: _____

Are you testifying as a: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? 5 minutes

Please provide a brief statement on your position:

Personal experience with my children related to restricted use of bathrooms.

Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.

Chair Young, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Miller, and Members of the Higher Education Committee: I write this testimony to oppose House Bill 183.

I'm Amanda Fisher. My husband Chad and I have three children that we are raising in suburban Ohio – attending public schools.

My oldest, who has different body parts than me – had no issue going into the same public bathroom as me until he was eight. By then he had two younger siblings that I needed to help.

But the reason he stopped had more to do with his younger sibling than anything. When we were running errands around town, my then 4-year-old would scream about wanting to go to Target. As it turns out, Taylor needed to use the bathroom. And Taylor knew that at Target, there was a family restroom. I assumed this was because all other bathrooms in stores around are town were “in the back” through a scary dungeon-like hallway.

Then a pandemic ensued. We rarely went anywhere public for two years. We emerged and went on a trip; it was then that we learned that Taylor preferred and LOVED to be called by masculine terms. My Taylor was born with the same parts as me, but in his *heart* he is a boy.

When we flew home, Taylor seemed to grow an inch every time a stranger said ‘mister,’ ‘young man,’ or ‘sir.’ My husband wasn't with us on the trip, but at seven years old, Taylor had long since trained me to look for the family restrooms – so I was not trying to take my sons into women's restrooms. But on our layover we were in a rush, and the family restroom near our gate was occupied. I acquiesced to Taylor's begging me to allow him to go into the men's room with his older brother. It was like Taylor grew another inch, he was so happy to use the men's bathroom.

That summer, as we went to restaurants, Taylor had strong opinions. But it wasn't about the food; it was about the bathrooms. Taylor knew the restaurants in our town that had gender neutral bathrooms.

Fast forward two months. Taylor is returning to public school after two years online.

The school was incredibly supportive of Taylor's pronoun preference, but they were hesitant about bathrooms. We all told Taylor to use the nurse's bathroom or the girl's bathroom.

On the first day of school, Taylor packed his lunch and water bottle. On day two, Taylor refused to bring his water bottle.

By the end of the week, I saw it. My second grader wet his pants walking home from school.

After a few weeks of wet pants on and off, Taylor explained what was going on.

The nurse's restroom was too far away. So, if one of the two girls room passes was in use, he would ‘hold it’ because he didn't want to be in the bathroom with a girl from his class. If both girls passes were there, but he went to the girls restroom and heard voices, he would head back to class. It was only when the girls bathroom was empty that he would use it. If other girls came in, he would wait in the stall until they left. He wanted to privately use the bathroom, without anyone questioning his belonging based on his outward appearance.

You might be wondering, “In all the time he was using to think about going to the bathroom, couldn’t he take the time to walk to the office?” The answer is that he felt *even more uncomfortable* because it was ‘weird’ to go to the adults’ bathroom.

He wanted to use the bathroom that matched his internal identity and outward appearance – one that was for kids AND for boys.

So we told Taylor to use whatever bathroom he wanted. He stopped wetting his pants. He started bringing his water bottle to school.

I hope you are uncomfortable after learning how uncomfortable, stressed out *and dehydrated* a second grader was because of bathrooms at his school.

And that was when there was no law he was breaking.

That was when his parents were advocating fiercely about his preferred pronouns but not understanding the pain we were causing him by discouraging the use of the bathroom that matched his identity.

His heart vs his parts.

His parents are advocating now.

My husband and I emphatically ask you to vote no on House Bill 183.