

October 2, 2023

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

RE: Opponent to HB 183

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Miller and members of the Ohio House Higher Education Committee:

My name is Allison Ritting and I am a resident of Columbus, Ohio. I am writing to voice my concern about a bill being heard in the House Higher Education Committee. HB 183 would be detrimental to the safety of LGBTQ+ youth and a threat to their education. As a member of the LGBTQ+ community and a pediatric healthcare provider, I believe that this bill is harmful and unnecessary. Please do not support this bill and vote no if it comes up for a vote.

This legislature includes provisions that target vulnerable youth and obligate public school officials to put students at risk. By requiring individuals to use a bathroom that aligns with their "biological sex", HB 183 would thereby ban transgender students from using school bathrooms that align with their gender identity. This will only encourage further stigmatization and isolation of transgender individuals. This bill is predicated on the false notion that transgender individuals are a threat to other students, despite there being no evidence to support harm associated with transgender individuals using bathrooms consistent with their gender identity.

HB 183 sets a dangerous precedent of targeting and stigmatizing transgender and gender diverse individuals. Transgender students already face increased bullying and discrimination. Forcing transgender individuals to use a bathroom that does not align with their gender identity will only increase feelings of rejection and isolation. Every student deserves a fair chance to succeed in school. Taking away the ability to feel comfortable and safe while using a bathroom is detrimental to academic participation.

We must protect children, including LGBTQ+ youth, and ensure that they have access to a safe school environment. HB 183 puts already vulnerable LGBTQ+ youth at risk and negatively impacts their education. Therefore, I request that you do not support this bill and vote no if it comes up for a vote. Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony in opposition to HB 183.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Allison Ritting".

Allison Ritting