

Good morning Chair Young, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Miller, and members of the House Higher Education Committee. My name is Mike Pohlman and I am the superintendent of the Marion Local school district. I am in my 13<sup>th</sup> year as superintendent at Marion Local and have served as a school administrator for over 20 years. I also belong to the organization WOAN which stands for Western Ohio Advocacy Network, and is comprised of approx. 40 superintendents in West central Ohio. I am here today representing my local district and WOAN in support of House Bill 183.

I have spent my career ensuring that every student that enters our doors feel safe and receives a quality education. Students face a number of challenges and we are tasked with making difficult decisions that I embrace as a superintendent. I support the ability for districts to make decisions at the local level. Statewide policies imposing one viewpoint or course of action on every district are problematic since they don't know the different circumstances each district faces. Communication is essential to work through difficult situations, and local control will allow me an opportunity to facilitate a conversation with the student and their family and develop a plan that presents the best possible outcome for all students.

This bill will allow districts to make decisions on how to best support each of their students. The desire to use private bathroom facilities can come from a variety of factors, including both physical health and mental health needs. We need the security of HB 183 and local communities are in the best position to make the decisions on the operation of their districts. The law is far from settled, and during this time of uncertainty districts need to be able to know that they are protecting their entire student population without the fear of being sued or losing funding because of their policies.

I am not here today to debate protecting one group of children over another. HB 183 provides me the opportunity to have local control to make a decision in the best interest of everyone. I respectfully request that the Committee favorably report this bill out of committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike L. Pohlman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael L. Pohlman, Marion Local superintendent