

Honorable Chair Tom Young, Vice Chair Gayle Manning, Ranking Member Joe Miller, and Members of the House Higher Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today about this very important piece of legislation.

My name is Dr. Todd Marrah. This is my 35th year as an educator. I serve as Superintendent of Tree of Life Christian Schools in Columbus. We are one of the most diverse Christian schools in the nation, serving nearly 1000 students from 25 nations, 11 counties, 59 zip codes and 235 churches. They are from a broad variety of racial and ethnic background and socio economic backgrounds.

I am here to testify of behalf of families, in particular, for children and students who are afraid to speak up for themselves. On a regular basis our school receives phone calls from families who want to protect their children from what is happening in their area schools.

Recently, a family with 5 children from Upper Arlington called me to say that the senior daughter came to the parents to tell them it was time to get her younger children out of the schools because it was no longer safe for them. That year, she graduated from UA but wanted to make sure her siblings did not face what she was seeing in her own school. All four of those students now attend Tree of Life as do many others who have had similar concerns.

I want to be a voice for those families today. As a life long, highly educated school leader, please hear me say that girls bathrooms and locker rooms are for girls. Young ladies need privacy and need to be safe. As a Superintendent, it is my job to make sure the girls in our school are safe and have a strong sense of being safe. Having boys and even men in girls designated private and safe spaces puts them at risk.

Schools exist to teach their students the truth. It is immoral for any educator to intentionally lie to a student about who they are. We serve many students who struggle with many things including gender dysphoria. We love them and lead them away from the things that hurt them. As you know, children in our culture are dealing with many difficult things and their feelings often betray them. We need to have the courage to help them through how they are “feeling” by guiding them with kindness and grace and with reality and truth. Having men in the private spaces of little girls only hurts everyone involved.

May I strongly encourage you to courageously defend these children by passing this bill.

Respectfully and prayerfully submitted,

Todd R. Marrah PhD