

**Testimony, HB 183
House Higher Education Committee
December 6, 2023**

Chair Young, Vice-Chair Manning, Ranking Member Miller, and members of the House Higher Education Committee, thank you for your time and for providing the opportunity to read our testimony.

My name is Liam Strausbaugh, I use he/they pronouns, and I am a licensed Ohio social worker and staff member with the Ohio chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW OH).

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the 3,800 members of the Ohio Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers expressing concerns with House Bill 183.

As you have previously heard, the proposed intent of HB 183 is to protect all Ohio children, however this bill does the exact opposite. HB 183 unfairly targets a small number of vulnerable Ohio children and represents the latest in a multi-front attack on transgender youth not only across our country, but specifically here in Ohio.

Social workers are highly trained professionals who provide care to Ohioans of all ages in some of life's most difficult situations. You can find social workers at nearly every healthcare facility and community service agency, as well as many schools, prisons, and senior centers. Social workers are an important member of the care team for children, especially for transgender and non-binary youth, and those questioning their gender identity.

Many of our members work with transgender youth and have seen firsthand the harassment and bullying that these children face on a daily basis. HB 183 will force these children, and even adults, to use restroom and locker room facilities that do not align with their gender identity. As a result, transgender youth will face additional abuse and harassment. This bill places transgender youth and adults in direct danger.

Further, HB 183 will create an environment where children can have their gender questioned by peers and adults alike. This creates a scenario where even children whose gender identity matches their sex assigned at birth may still face harassment if their physical appearance does not conform to societal norms.

I understand that some parents may have concerns with transgender youth accessing certain facilities, however these issues are extremely rare and can be resolved locally; we should not legislate by anecdote, especially when the solution will cause significant harm.

We ask that you vote no on HB 183.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



Liam Strausbaugh, LSW
National Association of Social Workers – Ohio Chapter