

My name is Lis Regula. I live in Columbus, Ohio. I'm here today testifying in opposition to House Bill 183, which would require me to use the women's restroom at work and my teenage daughter to use the men's restroom at school. This is a deeply personal subject for me, not just because of who I am but also because of what I do. I'm a faculty member at the University of Dayton in the biology department. I'm proud of having written the first ungendered human anatomy textbook, and I regularly work with students who are exploring their gender, coming out for the first time, or have known for a while who they are. For some, the safety of college away from intolerant parents and sometimes unsafe home lives can be their authentic selves for the first time. This bill would put yet another barrier in their way to an accessible college education.

My career is in higher education. I'm a first-generation college student. Education is the key to upward mobility, whether in college, trade school, or an apprenticeship. By putting more barriers in the way of schooling, we're not just preventing people from being authentically who they are. We're not just telling them they are unacceptable because of who they are. We're making it harder for them to earn a living wage in a world where we know that LGBTQ people make less than the general population. No one chooses to be a part of a marginalized community. No one decides to have a shorter lifespan because of who they are. No one chooses to be bullied, discriminated against, made fun of, or have their lives threatened because of who they are. Speaking for myself, I struggled immensely with my identity and the repercussions I knew it would have on my life before coming out. I'm not going to lie. It was an even more complex emotion for me when my daughter came out. However, as parents, we all want our children to do as well or better than we did. Bills like HB 183 make it less likely that I can expect my daughter to have that improved life compared to mine.

We have already seen higher rates of anxiety and depression in teens today than in previous years. I'll leave it to other people to discuss the reasons behind that and the data behind it. That's not my area of expertise; my area of expertise is biology. This bill does not defer to biology, despite its references to "biological sex." This bill ignores biology. This bill attempts to erase the fact that there are intersex people, trans people, gender non-conforming people, and nonbinary people. I'm not just talking about gender here if we want to make the distinction between gender and sex. I'm also talking about what people are assigned at birth because the fact is that that assignment that goes on the birth certificate when an infant is born is nothing more than an indicator of what genitalia they have. Too often, it's even less- only an approximation of what genitalia they have because here in Ohio, we don't have a designation on the birth certificate for individuals who fall outside of a gender binary at birth. Thankfully, we have gotten away from the barbaric tradition of intervening surgically to 'correct' an infant's genitalia so that they can be forced into one of two boxes.

That birth certificate says nothing about the chromosomes that a person has. For reference, it is more common at a rate of 1 in 500 live births for people to be born with something other than XY or XX chromosomes than for people to be born with Down syndrome, which has a rate of one in 700 to one in 1100. That birth certificate also says nothing about what levels of hormones an individual has. It says nothing about how that person feels or who that person sees themselves as. If someone put this much weight on an infant's genitalia in any other circumstance, we would consider them deeply disturbed.

Within biology, we have long understood that gender is not just a binary structure. People at the time of Darwin wrote about and documented instances of roosters laying eggs or lionesses with large manes. Across the history of humans, we have more than two genders represented in countless indigenous

people, from the hijra in India to the two-spirit people in Native American cultures. Speaking as a biologist, this bill flies in the face of what we understand about humans and the world. Speaking as a dad, this bill is one of the reasons my daughter cries herself to sleep some nights, and speaking as an Ohioan, this bill is terrible for our state. We already saw in North Carolina in 2016 when the bathroom bill damaged their economy. That was a broader range bill, costing billions of dollars as people and businesses chose not to do business with it because of a statement that policed public bathrooms.

When talking about trans rights, it is not uncommon for people to bring up children and protect them, yet this bill does not protect them. It is not even limited to children. This bill covers schools from kindergarten through college. I grew up proud that Ohio had as many institutes of higher education as it does. We have many public, private, religious, secular, and large and small colleges. In a world where more people are OK with coming out and embracing their gender identity, even when it is one of those identities that are currently under attack, this bill will make it harder for those institutes of higher learning to attract the best and brightest students, faculty, staff, researchers, and leaders.

Besides just those schools, this bill will impact the ability of corporations located in Ohio to attract the best and brightest employees. Most parents want what is best for their kids and will move to a state with high-quality schools, allowing their children to become their best selves. This bill makes our schools less safe and less attractive to parents. We have already heard talk of people leaving the state so that their kids can feel more protected and not have their health care and rights threatened. This bill gives those families one more reason to go and how likely it will be for a company to invest here, relocate here, or expand into Ohio if the landscape is such that they will have difficulty finding employees.

This economic impact eventually led to the reversal of North Carolina's bathroom bill. I don't want to see Ohio make that same mistake. I don't want to see my daughter face more challenges than she already does. I don't want to lose students who wish to be themselves. I don't want to reconsider whether I can keep doing what I love and excel at, yet that's the choice this bill pushes. Having safe restrooms in a school setting where people spend multiple hours a day is not just about the ability to express themselves. It's about the ability to take care of essential biological functions. I don't know about other people. I see public restrooms as unclean, uncomfortable places where I only want to do one thing: go to the bathroom, wash my hands, and get out as quickly as possible. I can guarantee that the students who would benefit from this bill failing to pass in Ohio are looking for the same thing.

I'm not the type of guy that will ask for help easily or readily. I'll be the first to admit that I take pride in being as self-sufficient as I am despite being a widower and single parent to a kid with complex medical needs before she ever came out as trans. Despite that, I'm here before you today. My heart is on my sleeve, and my hat is in my hand. Please do not pass this bill. Please do not hurt my daughter, the other kids and parents who are testifying today, my students, colleagues, and myself with this dangerous legislation.