

**House Bill 8**  
**Melissa Meyer**  
**Opponent Testimony**  
**House Primary and Secondary Education Committee**

**May 9, 2023**

Chair Bird, Vice Chair Fowler Arthur, Ranking Member Robinson, and Members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Melissa Meyer. I am in my 18th year as a middle school math teacher at Berea City School District. I strongly oppose HB8. My testimony today is in opposition to HB8. It shouldn't have to be said that every child deserves to feel safe and supported at school. That includes having the opportunity to be themselves and build trusting and mutually respectful relationships with teachers. HB8 would break and DESTROY that trust, plain and simple.

I oppose HB 8 because the language in the Unsafe Students Act is HARMFUL to our LGBTQ+ students. Sharing this deeply personal information without student consent can be both dangerous and traumatizing for the student. Schools must remain a safe space for students and educators. This standard goes against the Whole Child Framework of the Department of Education, which stresses "equity and specific needs of individual students" as the core tenets of our strategic plan for education.

HB8 also creates dishonesty in education, as it would decrease access to medically accurate sex education. The bill doesn't require a standard of medical accuracy in the instructional materials used in high schools across the state. Inaccurate medical information is very problematic.

Since Ohio already has regulations that govern parental notice, review and opting out of instruction, keeping this bill for those purposes seems redundant and unnecessary. Public schools are already required to establish policies that allow parents to be more actively involved in their children's education and maintain "consistent and effective" communication between parents and their children's school.

Being an educator with a classroom of my own, I worry that “oversight” outlined in HB8 will create a culture of intimidating or targeting educators. The bill encourages and sows division and distrust of educators and creates a pipeline for the community to micromanage educators. And with the INCREDIBLE challenges that our education systems is facing currently with the state-wide teacher shortage, COVID related learning loss, under-funding, the high need for mental health services for students and the fear and trauma caused by so many recent gun violence incidents, HB8 will only add to the significantly strain and tense education system.

Similar legislation to HB8 was introduced to Congress, where even conservative leaders disagreed with its intent and scope. This type of legislation puts LBGTQ+ students at greater risk, politicizes education and fails to deliver resources that the schools and families need.

Thank you for your time. To reiterate, I vehemently oppose HB8 because it creates a potentially unsafe and traumatizing environment for minority students, when EVERY student is entitled to a safe and supportive space. Please show me that we support every student in our state, even if they are different from us, by voting NO on HB8.

Show us that the kids do come first, including their safety and well-being, vote no on HB8.

Thank you for your consideration.