

I spent one Sunday evening participating in a training on how to write this testimony. I felt empowered to take part in the civic process and grateful for the free resource available to me. But when it came time to write the testimony, I felt deep despair that my task was to find the right combination of words to protect my child from the government.

Why must I protect my child from the government? Something has gone terribly wrong here. Passing laws that harm children is not what Ohio legislators should be doing.

I am writing in opposition to HB 8. The vague language would prevent my child from safely describing herself at school.

Around age 3, My child let our family know that she was not the gender we thought she was. Neither she nor I had the words to know exactly what was going on, so I found resources for children and parents. As we learned more words and she learned more about herself, she told us that the word that fits her is “nonbinary.”

As she told Governor DeWine when we happened to meet him at the St. Louis airport, “Nonbinary is a helpful word for when someone is neither a boy nor a girl, both, or something else.” My child’s pronouns are she/her. We legally changed her name to fit her. But, she is my child, not my daughter or son, because she is nonbinary. These are all helpful words for getting to know my child.

My child thrives in school when she is with teachers she trusts and when those teachers are able to use their knowledge and passion to educate her. HB 8 will be used to intimidate and silence teachers, especially when it comes to LGBTQ+ students.

Perhaps the most helpful word to explain to this legislative body my point of view is the word, “Mother.” From the moment my child was born, every fiber of my being strives to protect her. There is nothing more natural and instinctual than a parent fighting for the survival of her child.

This legislation harms my child. Stop it.