

June 12, 2023

To the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee

House Bill 8

Opposition testimony

Written only

To Chair Bird, Vice Chair Arthur, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee:

Before amendments were added to House Bill 8 last week, our organization already opposed its content because it will result in less safety and more harm directed at LGBTQ+ children.

Now that amendments have been added, we can see clearly that Ohio's legislators do not care if Ohio's LGBTQ+ children live or die, as you all have chosen not even to carve out an exception for fears of abuse or potential abuse, while adding language that makes "sexuality content" (aka, any content about us, our families, our lives, and our communities) seem somehow risky for students to learn about.

Here is a peer reviewed study which found a causal link between LGBTQ+ identity and rates of abuse experienced by children, indicating that bills like this—which single out LGBTQ+ children for harm—directly contribute to worse life outcomes:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3134495/>

As LGBTQ+ Ohioans, we continue our firm opposition to House Bill 8.

While our profound grief at not being considered as worthy of safety in the state of Ohio continues as well, our fears that the next generation of LGBTQ+ Ohioans will have fates worse than ours are clearly warranted. By voting yes on this bill, you are directly contributing to rates of substance use, poor mental health, suicidality, and abuse among the next generation of Ohioans.

**Please vote no on House Bill 8.**

The Cleveland Bisexual+ Network



Submitted by Elaine Schleiffer (she/her), co-founder