

## Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 1

February 2023

Linda Harvey, President, Mission America, [www.missionamerica.com](http://www.missionamerica.com)

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on Senate Bill 1. I am opposed to the bill as it now stands because too much unaccountable power would belong to the executive branch. While there is no doubt that education in Ohio is in crisis, SB 1 is a risky and unwarranted concentration of influence, and leaves virtually no means of recourse for the parents and citizens to have a voice.

If amended to allow input by the public and strong oversight by the Senate, the bill might begin to be acceptable. Yet there are many other areas where education in Ohio needs prompt remedies. Much more attention to academics is number one, but in order to return to an academic focus, schools must be directed to drop failed, inappropriate frameworks like “social emotional learning” and “diversity, equity and inclusion,” which has become a smokescreen for far-left propaganda including blatantly racist, anti-American, anti-law enforcement messages.

It's time to scrap this nonsense and return to academics only. Will that happen under the Governor's oversight?

Senate Bill 1 should be amended to mandate the following:

- Open meetings – Monthly meetings conducted by both the Deputy Directors of Education and Workforce. Meetings open to the public for individuals to speak for five minutes.
- Televised meetings – All meetings shall be live-streamed and televised. All televised meetings shall be archived for future reference.
- Urge schools to stop doing surveys and assessments; only focus on academics.
- Senate shall have the authority to advise and dissent (remove) the Director of DEW, Deputy Director of Education and Deputy Director of Workforce.

Ohio Republicans now as well as recent GOP administrations have not proven they are trustworthy to be entrusted with sweeping education oversight. The Ohio Department of Education has been allowed to publish on its website anti-family, anti-abstinence, sexually high risk information regarding student and teacher behavior, even though accountability could have been pursued through GOP-friendly elected OBOE representatives, appointed OBOE representatives, and House and Senate Education committees.

For instance, “LGBTQ” behaviors and identities for students and teachers are specifically named as supportable in numerous ODE programs. Ohio families are furious when these behaviors and identities are actively promoted as worthwhile, low risk and normal to Ohio children, or proudly lauded by their teachers. Where exists, at the very least, an alternate voice on this very controversial conduct?

Here are a few specifics. Under [Project AWARE](#), a mental health program administered by ODE, the [Trevor Project](#) appears as a suicide prevention resource for “LGBTQ” youth. Quick exit keyboard instructions are given to initial youth visitors to this high-risk, anti-parent, blatantly discriminatory site. Trevor is in reality a homosexual activist website which advises troubled youth that entering a homosexual life and attempting to change sexual identity are safe and normal options, and that their parents are hateful if they object.

Trevor Project hosts [Trevor Space](#), featuring unmonitored chat rooms. Adults can easily enter chat areas and gain access to troubled youth. Why not just post a sign, “Sex traffickers welcome”?

Trevor Project and “Trans Line” are both listed as worthy resources by the [Ohio School Safety Center](#).

ODE adopted “[social emotional learning](#)” as the focus of its strategic plan in 2019. Among the many problems with SEL, these vendors routinely promote acceptance of homosexual behavior and gender confusion as part of “self-awareness,” “social awareness” or “relationship skills” competencies, as well as comprehensive sex education which encourages early sexual behavior in teens.

SEL needs to be removed as a primary focus of the Ohio Department of Education Strategic Plan, and the Strategic Plan needs to drop its embrace of a “whole child” perspective.

No entity but a child’s family has authority over the “whole child,” nor should they. This is not any school’s job.

Perhaps Senate Bill 1 can be amended to once again focus on academics instead of amateur psychotherapy during class time, or any counseling done without a parent’s permission. There are numerous reports in Ohio of private gender confusion counseling at school with no parent knowledge.

And this administration and the ODE support school-based health clinics, even though such clinics are well-known by the pro-life community to be an access point for contraceptives for underage minors, even without parental consent, as well as referral for abortion. [In the ODE position paper on school-based health clinics on the website](#), “Higher contraceptive use among females” is listed prominently as a benefit for students.

Yet Ohio has a law that schools are to encourage abstinence until marriage (ORC 3313.6011). This is what’s happening now, under a GOP administration. Can we expect improvement under a new education empire?

So despite the acknowledged failures of education in Ohio, I remain unconvinced that the solution is provided in SB 1.

Thank you for giving attention to my testimony.