

As a retired teacher with forty-three years of experience, I implore you to vote NO on HB 8. During my years of teaching, more than one student has approached me about being gay, lesbian, or bisexual. They all said they felt the need to tell an adult but were afraid to tell their parents. Later, some of them did tell their parents. Three were thrown out of their house. One committed suicide. HB 8 puts some of our youth at risk.

I also understand that risk because I lived it as a teenager.

In 1971 I became suicidal. I had realized I am gay. There were no books in the library, no television shows, no people with whom I could talk. Furthermore, I belonged to a church that said gay people are an abomination in the eyes of God and will burn in hell, and only a short time earlier did the medical profession remove sexual orientation from the DSM. Police were still raiding gay bars. If I had not trusted my English teacher and felt I could talk freely with her, you would not be reading this email. I would be dust in a box. She saved my life. I became an English teacher because of her. Vote "no" on this bill. You have a chance to keep some students alive.