

Dear esteemed committee members,

My name is Lis Regula, and I'm a resident here in Columbus, Ohio and an educator at the University of Dayton. I'm writing today in opposition to House Bill 8 as this bill would negatively impact our state and educational system. While this bill may sound innocuous on the surface, as a Parents' Bill of Rights, the language of this bill has several likely impacts that do not make our schools or our children any safer or better than they currently are.

HB 8 would put additional burdens on teachers in the K through 12 system at a point in time when we are already facing critical shortages in many of our public schools. In November, we saw how Ohioans disapprove of unnecessary government overreach into our lives and professions, and this bill is an excellent example of that overreach. While I teach in higher education, many friends are in the K through 12 system. Their profession is highly scrutinized, especially when considering pending Ohio legislation like this bill. HB8 adds to their burden when we already have trouble recruiting enough teachers to staff many of our schools. Ohio has historically had a solid educational system, and that is one of the things that can draw both investment and employees to a state. Hurting our public education system with additional rules and regulations makes it harder for Ohio to be competitive. With our last census in 2020, Ohio lost representation because we were growing slower than other states. This imposition will likely lead to further loss of Ohio's representation at the federal level if we choose to hurt our educational system with this bill.

HB8 also lays out a definition of "biological sex" that is in opposition to Title 9. Imposing this contradiction with federal agencies would put our schools at risk of lawsuits and losing funding by not complying with those national standards. The definition that HB8 sets also goes against what is currently accepted within biology. Speaking as a biology professor, the idea that the definition put forth in HB8 upholds is a definition that we have moved further and further away from as we learn more and more about the diversity that exists in our natural world, including humans. The irony that a different definition based on ideology instead of science would become part of Ohio's regulations guiding the education of our children is not lost to me.

Teachers in Ohio currently undergo rigorous training, education, and licensure to perform the tasks we ask of them in their daily work lives. At a time when our teachers need our support, we should look for ways to support them- things like better funding, better pay, and improved facilities- things that will enhance our retention rates. Additionally, we should be trusting that they know how to do the jobs they have been educated, trained, and licensed to do better than politicians or activists. Considering the time, effort, and resources (often out of their pocket) that Ohio's K through 12 teachers put into our children, providing them the support they are asking for and the support they need seems like the right thing to do. This bill is contrary to those goals and does not further our children's education, our state's educational system, or the potential for investment in our state. For those reasons, I ask that you please join me in opposing HB8 and vote no.