

Chairman Brenner and Respected Members of the Committee:

My name is Celine Rajoulh, a second-year medical student deeply concerned about Ohio HB 8 and its potential ramifications on patient outcomes. This bill, if enacted, **would limit access to comprehensive, evidence-based sexual education**—ultimately jeopardizing the physical and mental well-being of Ohio's adolescents.

As future healthcare providers, we are entrusted with the responsibility to advocate for policies that promote the best possible health outcomes and prevent the worst. Ohio HB 8, with its focus on abstinence-only education and the erasure of discussions around gender identity and sexual orientation, undermines this responsibility. **By restricting information crucial for making informed decisions about sexual health, this bill directly contributes to negative health outcomes.**

Research consistently demonstrates that comprehensive sexual education leads to better health outcomes. When students are equipped with accurate information about contraception, STI prevention, and healthy relationships, they are better prepared to make responsible choices regarding their health. Conversely, **limiting education to an abstinence-only approach has been shown to correlate with higher rates of unintended pregnancies and STIs, leading to detrimental health consequences for our youth.**

Furthermore, the omission of discussions on gender identity and sexual orientation perpetuates health disparities among marginalized communities, and the forced outing of students through restricted educational practices is a direct threat to their mental health. **LGBTQ+ youth already face disproportionately higher rates of depression, anxiety, physical and sexual violence, and suicidal ideation due to societal discrimination and lack of acceptance.** HB 8's provisions amplify this danger by creating an environment that could expose these individuals to further hostility and rejection.

It is crucial to understand that forced outing not only **violates privacy rights but also endangers the emotional and psychological well-being of these students.** This bill's potential to contribute to a crisis among vulnerable youth is a stark reminder of the immense responsibility we hold in safeguarding their dignity and health.

The consequences of Ohio HB 8 will reverberate through our communities, affecting the long-term health trajectories of our youth. I implore you to consider the undeniable link between comprehensive sexual education and positive health outcomes.

**Reject HB 8 and instead advocate for policies that prioritize evidence-based, inclusive sexual education, ensuring the best possible health outcomes for Ohio's youth.**

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Celine Rajoulh