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Chairman Brenner, Ranking Member Ingram and members of the Ohio Senate Education Committee,

My name is Erin Upchurch, my pronouns are she/her. I am a parent of two young adults, an independently licensed social worker and former therapist in the state of Ohio, and the Executive Director of [Kaleidoscope Youth Center](https://www.kycohio.org/); Ohio's largest and longest standing organization to serve and support LGBTQIA+ youth and young adults ages 12-24.

I am writing to express absolute opposition to HB 8.

HB 68 is blatant discrimination. This bill unnecessarily targets LGBTQIA+, their families, allied providers, health professionals, and educators. Something as simple as a teacher's family picture on their desk, or a student's family or identity organically arising as a topic, would become an issue; something that non LGBTQIA+ individuals never need to deal with. **HB 8 politicizes the lives of young people in Ohio, with zero regard for their health and well-being; and is an egregious misuse of power, and a breach of public trust in caring for the youth of Ohio.**

This is a resource issue, not one of legislation. It is the parent/guardian's right *and* responsibility to build relationships with their young people that fosters important and sensitive conversations. Any disconnect falls in the lap of the adults as it is up to them to identify resources that would support connection with their children.

This legislation ignores the already determined best practices of mental health support, treatment and care. Currently, the [Ohio revised code indicates](#) that minors aged 14 and up can consent to their own mental health treatment without consent or knowledge of the minors guardian (as long as it does not include treatment with medication).

Requirements that conflict with other legal and ethical obligations. As an independently licensed social worker, this bill is in direct opposition to the National Association Social Work [Values and Code of Ethics](#), such as self determination, informed consent, privacy and confidentiality; and commitment to clients.

This bill lacks consistency of focus and further targets and undermines the humanity and dignity of those targeted. Defining biological sex has nothing to do with parental rights.

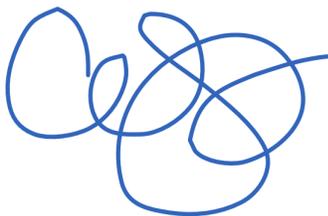
Sponsors and proponents of this bill are grossly out of scope. Making and asserting decisions related to identity, medical practices, and science are fully outside of the scope of a legislator, which means they are making determinations for others that are outside of their expertise and education. In most professions, **this type of practice is considered unethical.**

HB 8 centers the biases and misunderstandings of adults, and is out of touch with the actual needs of young people in Ohio. Ohio's youth and young adults deserve more. They deserve better from the adults and leaders put into positions of power in interest of supporting and promoting their thriving. Legislation and policies such as HB 8 do nothing to protect any child or young person; and instead, only further marginalize and promote harm. This is bullying behavior.

Moving this legislation forward would demonstrate a complete lack of regard and concern for the lives, futures, and perhaps, most importantly, the humanity of Ohio's youth.

Please reject HB 8.

Sincerely,



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