

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair O'Brien, and members of the Senate Education Committee:

My name is Halle Martin. Thank you for allowing me to provide written testimony.

I am concerned about the possibly unintended consequences of HB8.

- This bill conflates LGBTQ identities with sexual content. This bill defines “sexuality content” as an oral or written instruction or depiction of sexual concepts or gender ideology. The replacement of “sexually explicit content” with the foregoing definition, including gender ideology allows for the weaponization against and censorship of LGBTQ students and educators and puts even straight and cisgender educators in an untenable position. Imagine a kindergarten student sharing about her two moms on All About Me day. Does a teacher have to ignore any discussion about the fact that the student has two moms? There are already protections and opt-out provisions in Ohio for sex education curriculum. There is no evidence that LGBTQ topics are being taught in Ohio schools at all – even in sex ed classes. But to weaponize casual classroom conversations about students and their families – or even age-appropriate discussions about inclusion – is simply wrong.
- This bill adds a definition of “sex”, which is defined as “sex assigned at birth.” This is not only contrary to the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Bostock* authored by Neil Gorsuch, it has NOTHING to do with parental rights. There is no legitimate reason for this provision of the bill other than denying the existence of transgender people. This provision should be removed.

I urge you to vote no on HB8 – at least in its present form. Or to amend the bill to address legitimate concerns of parents without discriminating against LGBTQ individuals.