

My name is Jeff Remaklus from Toledo and I am writing this witness statement as an opponent to HB 8. I have been a family nurse practitioner for over 8 years now along with 5 years as a RN. Therefore I have seen how bills like this one can negatively affect the children, teachers, and counselors. The children will not feel safe to come out as themselves out of fear they will be outed to their parents. This is an important part of their identity. This is during their most informative years when they are figuring out their identity. HB 8 doesn't allow students to feel safe to even discuss this with a potential safe person at school or begin to understand who they are. This can lead to low self-worth and lead to risky lifestyle choices and increase their risk of suicide. This affects everyone.

As a provider who has to keep patient information secret, I can't imagine the government telling me that we have to "out" our patients. This was ONE of my major problems with HB 68 and the regulations set forth by Governor DeWine with regards to requiring us to report gender dysphoria to the government. This puts teachers and counselors in a bad position. They may potentially be the only safe person these kids can come to about their feeling on their identity, and the teachers/counselors have to think twice before helping them. Talking to the students about their identity, including gender, could cost them their jobs.

Why should teachers want to come into an environment like that? Why should they want to work in Ohio? I wouldn't. If we don't get good teachers, why should professionals want to come here with their kids? You can start to see the economic dominoes falling.

To me, the most important thing is looking out for the kids and giving them a way to talk about themselves. This bill hampers it because SOME parents are uncomfortable about the topic. Parents should, for sure, talk to their kids and discuss these things. Talk to them about why you might not agree with something that is taught, but making our children ignorant and lacking the ability to express themselves appropriately is wrong.

Do not let HB 8 go any further. Let it die in committee, as it should.

Thank you.