

Ohio Senate Education Committee

April 23, 2024

HB 8 Testimony

Jeanne Ogden

Hello, Chair Brenner, Vice Chair O'Brien, and Ranking Member Ingram. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today regarding HB 8. I am the mom of a twenty-something transgender daughter, the co-founder of Trans Allies of Ohio, and an engineer educated by Ohio State University. My family has lived here all my life. Our daughters could sing the Ohio State fight song when they were 3.

I am here to fight for the kind of Ohio that voters, parents, school children, and businesses want.

One of my kids wrote an essay about how Ohio lawmakers, the officials elected by we, the people, should govern this state. What was interesting about her essay, and quite astute for a child, was not what she said lawmakers should do for the state, but what they should not. She explained that lawmakers should not make laws that the people don't want. That rang true for me, because I can't for the life of me understand why you keep bringing laws to this body, listening to our testimony, and passing them through.

I'm an engineer, so let's look at your stats.

Between anti-LGBTQ bills H.B. 8, H.B. 68, S.B. 83, and H.B. 183 the General Assembly has received 1,846 pieces of official testimony. Of that testimony, only 118 testimonies wanted these bills. 52 were merely interested. 1676 testimonies strongly opposed these bills.

That's 6 % who agree with your way of thinking.

3% are merely interested.

91% think these bills are a waste of taxpayer's time, harmful to our economy, and a threat to our personal freedom to choose how we want to live, teach our kids, and love one another.

With regard to H.B. 8 specifically, 7 testimonies agreed with you, 2 were interested, and 109 were vehemently opposed to this bill. That's 6% in favor to 92% begging you not to enact this bill.

Let's consider those numbers in more detail. On the proponent side of this equation we have, Opportunity Solutions Project, a hazmat chemist, a parent who listed a few hypotheticals, a woman who has been trolling school boards around the state seen hanging out with the Proud Boys, a woman from an organization called Mean Street, and the president of Mission America

who believes "No, because overlooking bad behavior does no one any favors. Embracing homosexuality is nowhere close to what Jesus meant by loving one's neighbor, since God (and Jesus was and is God, don't forget) told us in Scripture that homosexual conduct is an "abomination," and is one of the many out-of-marriage sexual behaviors always identified as sin."

None of these people or organizations are psychologists, psychiatrists, or school counselors.

Against H.B. 8, we have the Ohio School Counselors Association, the Ohio Education Association, National Association of Social Workers, Children's Defense Fund, Toledo City School District, YWCA, Ohio Counseling Association, Columbus Board of Education, parents of Ohio students, and organizations that work directly with LGBTQ youth.

6% in favor of HB 8 and 92% opposed.

I've heard some representatives say they are legislating for all of Ohio, not just the people who show up at hearings. The people who show up at these hearings are those who know what the stakes are. They are the people who will be affected by this law. I might understand if the percentages were closer, but 92% to 6%? There is no way you can fudge those numbers to make them support your position that this bill is what Ohio wants.

Ohioans do not want this legislation. Ohioans want our government to respect the rights of all students. We want you to get to work on bigger problems and stop wasting our time and money to fight a boogeyman that does not exist.