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**Please oppose HB 8 - it hurts & harms educators, kids + Ohio families!**

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Dear Chair Brenner, Vice-Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Ingram, and the Senate Education Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my opposition to HB 8. As an educator - a teacher, school leader, instructional coach, and now consultant working across many Ohio communities, I'm listening to what we're hearing from experts - those closest to kids and families.

- Social workers and counselors who work directly with students oppose the bill - social workers and other mental health professionals are trained to honor client confidentiality, creating a safe, supportive environment for clients to discuss and explore their feelings and find safe ways to have these discussions with other people in their lives, including their parents.
- Our teachers, members of OEA and OFT, oppose the bill - they are clear that it prevents the kind of trust with students and families that helps Ohio schools thrive.
- Research says this type of legislation puts LGBTQ+ students at greater risk - when we know government's role is to support **each and every student in Ohio**. (Learn more here: <https://publicintegrity.org/inequality-poverty-opportunity/young-people-harmed-anti-trans-legislation/>)

I am so worried that political polarization is preventing our schools and communities from being places where Ohio students - everyone one of them - is safe, welcomed, and cared for.

Please take the time that's needed to listen to Ohio's experts - to connect with more students, educators, social workers, researchers - and hear their *major concerns* that HB 8 hurts Ohio - I encourage you to oppose this bill.



Lisa Vahey