

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

My name is Dr. Anna Gehres. I am a lifelong citizen of Ohio and a proud parent of two children who attend public schools. I care deeply about education and student wellness – not just my own children's but all the children of Ohio. I am a public educator myself and a daughter of a high school teacher.

When looking at legislation, I ask myself – what problem does this solve? Who is helped by this legislation? Who is harmed?

I read though HB 8 and I struggled to find anything that HELPS Ohio parents, students, teachers, or school counselors.

Rather I found a DISTURBING intrusion on the private lives of students. I know for fact that school counselors and social workers ALREADY have a legal obligation to intervene to PREVENT HARM. I have full trust in their professional code of conduct and ethics to appropriately triage student concerns.

.... But wait ... do you realize that this bill will actually CAUSE HARM?

And the death of students by suicide is what you will see because of this bill.

Is that the Ohio you want to be remembered for? Is that the legislative legacy you want to leave? A trail of dead students?

Thank you, Chair Brenner, and members of the committee, for allowing me to submit written testimony in opposition to HB 8.

I hope you will agree that HB 8 is not good for any Ohioan.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with further questions.

Most respectfully,

Anna Gehres, PharmD, RPh, BCACP Associate Professor - Practice