

Citizens for a Better Beavercreek strongly condemns Ohio House Bill 8, and calls upon our elected representatives to vote against it. HB 8 masquerades as a bill protecting children in public schools from age inappropriate “sexuality content”. Existing laws and policies already provide an adequate level of protection against children in public schools being provided with what would reasonably be considered by most people to be age-inappropriate material. Since children are already protected from inappropriate content, what is the true purpose of this legislation?

HB 8 employs a vague definition of “sexuality content” that could potentially be weaponized against topics involving the LGBTQ+ community. “Sexuality content” is defined in the proposed legislation as “any oral or written instruction, presentation, image, or description of sexual concepts or gender ideology”. What counts as “sexual concepts” or “gender ideology”? This is not specified – which raises the specter of families with two fathers or two mothers being labeled as “sexual concepts” and prohibited from classroom discussion. The vague and nonspecific language employed in this proposed legislation may well have been crafted to intentionally obscure its bigoted intent. Not all of the bigotry in the bill is hidden, however, in that discussion of trans individuals – not in and of itself a topic that is inherently sexual in nature – is explicitly prohibited in the legislation. What is crystal clear in this proposed legislation is that it is designed to push an anti-LGBTQ+ agenda.

In addition, the legislation requires school personnel to inform parents of any request on the part of a student to “identify as a gender that does not align with the student’s biological sex”. It is inappropriate to ask school personnel to intervene in matters related to what personal information students choose to share with their parents. These matters should be strictly between the student and the parent, and school personnel should have no role in determining what information is shared between them. Involving school districts in what are clearly family matters is unreasonable, and any parent who wants to know about their child’s gender identity is absolutely free to ask their child about it without any involvement whatsoever by the school district. This legislation is not only unnecessary – it involves the school in matters that should be strictly between parents and children. School personnel should not be expected to intervene in matters involving familial relationships. Parents who believe their children are choosing not to disclose personal information to them should seek to develop and maintain more healthy communicative relationships in their family, rather than expecting school personnel to become involved in familial interactions. It is ironic that legislation that is supposedly designed to reinforce parents’ rights paradoxically would force school personnel into family interactions where they don’t belong.

The LGBTQ+ community is currently under legislative attack in this state on many fronts – citizens of our great state should not be subject to legislatively codified bigotry. Citizens for a Better Beavercreek requests that state legislators abandon any and all legislation motivated by bigotry against our LGBTQ+ friends and family, and instead focus on fixing things that are actual problems our state faces. Bullying marginalized populations has no place in state legislation.

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