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Written testimony on HB 8 - Opponent

I am writing to share my intense concern for the safety of queer students in the state of Ohio if HB 8 were to pass. This bill is a dangerous attack on lgbtq children and an invasion of their privacy and ability to define themselves and their own identity.

This bill would create the forced outing of queer and transgender students. Many families may be affirming and accepting of queer kids, but some families would use this knowledge to create an unsafe environment for the student. This bill would result in the abuse both emotional and physical of students who are forcefully outed to unsafe households.

This bill is disingenuously attempting to frame itself as a protection of parental rights, protecting the wellbeing and health of kids. But it instead is just another attempt to scapegoat fear into vulnerable populations of our state. I see this fear often in my daily life now, as these bills embolden everyday violence against trans people. I see it in loud protests outside the Greater Cleveland LGBT Center recently, where transphobic protestors screamed on megaphones and held signs that said "Repent or Perish". I see it in neighborhoods of Cleveland Heights where someone has been drawing on the sidewalks and the outside of businesses with phrases like "End the tr*nny terrorism". I've experienced it myself when a man followed me through Cleveland's Little Italy neighborhood threatening me and yelling transphobic slurs at me.

These anti-trans bills are doing nothing productive and nothing to protect children. Bills like this are seeking to remove trans people from daily life and legislate us out of existence. It will not work. Trans people will always be here and certain legislators weak attempts to bully children will not erase us.