

**Opponent Testimony for HB 8**  
**Senate Education Committee**  
**December 10, 2024**

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Chair Brenner, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Education Committee

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony in opposition to HB 8. My name is Nicole Karn and I am the advisor to the OSTEM (Out in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) student organization at Ohio State University. I do not represent Ohio State University, but rather I am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to House Bill 8. I am specifically concerned about the bill's requirement that counselors and teachers "out" students to their parents. Many parents will accept their children should they come out as LGBTQ+, but many will not.

Throughout my career as an educator, I have seen students struggle with their gender identity, challenge societal gender roles, and, despite all the challenges they face, bravely become comfortable in their bodies. I have listened to their stories, heard their fears. Because of all of this, I know that this bill will make these students' lives much harder than they already are.

LGBTQ+ youth are more likely than their straight, cis peers to become unhoused or experience housing instability, often as a result of parental rejection. They are more likely to suffer from mental health issues such as depression. Suicide among LGBTQ+ youth is a public health crisis. Rates of depression and suicide only increase with parental rejection, housing instability, and legislation attacking the LGBTQ+ community. (Rhoades *et al.*)

This bill will cause a rise in suicides, housing instability, and mental health issues by forcing educators to "out" students to their parents who may not be accepting of their children. Please vote no on HB 8. Thank you.

Reference:

Rhoades, H., Rusow, J.A., Bond, D. *et al.* Homelessness, Mental Health and Suicidality Among LGBTQ Youth Accessing Crisis Services. *Child Psychiatry Hum Dev* **49**, 643–651 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10578-018-0780-1>