

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify. My name is Tammy Calhoun, and I am the proud mother of two adult children who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community. While my children were fortunate to grow up in a home where they knew they could confide in my husband and me without fear, I know that not all children share that safety at home. For those children, a teacher may be the only trusted adult in their lives—a lifeline in moments of confusion or crisis.

House Bill 8 endangers that lifeline. By forcing teachers to disclose private conversations about sensitive topics to parents, this bill risks the safety and well-being of vulnerable children. It undermines the essential trust that allows students to seek guidance, and it may leave children without anyone to turn to when they need it most. Research has shown that LGBTQIA+ youth are already at higher risk for mental health struggles, with more than half reporting they seriously considered suicide in the past year. Forcing disclosure without the student's consent only exacerbates this risk, creating a chilling effect where students no longer feel safe asking for help.

HB 8 prioritizes control over care, putting lives in danger. If this bill becomes law, we will be complicit in harming the very students our schools are supposed to protect.

I urge you to consider the real-life consequences of this legislation and the voices of the students and teachers it will impact. Please vote NO on House Bill 8. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

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