



December 8, 2024

Dear Senate Education Committee:

As the founder of Carve Your Own Path, a mental health organization dedicated to providing holistic and inclusive mental health services and specializing in care for LGBTQIA+ youth and young adults, I am writing to express our strong opposition to House Bill 8, the Parents' Bill of Rights Act. This legislation poses a significant threat to the mental health and well-being of LGBTQIA+ youth in Ohio.

HB 8 mandates that schools notify parents of any changes in a student's mental, emotional, or physical health, including a student's gender identity or expression. This requirement directly undermines the privacy and confidentiality of LGBTQIA+ youth who may not feel safe or supported at home. By forcing disclosure, this bill could expose these young people to potential harm, discrimination, and rejection.

Furthermore, the bill's vague language regarding "sexuality content" and "gender ideology" could lead to the censorship of vital information and resources that LGBTQIA+ youth need to thrive. Such restrictions can exacerbate feelings of isolation, shame, and despair, contributing to higher rates of mental health crises among this population.

As mental health professionals, we are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for our clients. HB 8 would hinder our ability to do so by limiting our capacity to build trust and provide necessary care.

We are already noticing 200% increases in calls to suicide hotlines for LGBTQIA+ individuals post-recent election results. These clients are living in constant fear and stress responses, which are detrimental to their mental and physical well-being, and inhibit their ability to pursue happiness. We urge you to vote against HB 8. By doing so, you can help protect the rights and well-being of LGBTQIA+ youth in Ohio.

Sincerely,

Amanda Kostura, LISW-S

Founder and President

Carve Your Own Path, Inc.

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