



For Young LGBTQ Lives

December 9, 2024
Ohio Senate
Senate Education Committee
Via email: brenner@ohiosenate.gov and obrien@ohiosenate.gov

RE: HB 8 'Enact the Parents Bill of Rights'

Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing on behalf of The Trevor Project to urge the Senate Committee on Education to vote against the passage of HB 8. If enacted, HB 8 would impose concerning curriculum censorship measures as well as potentially “out” LGBTQ+ young people to their parents and caregivers. Schools play a critical role in creating positive and affirming environments for LGBTQ+ young people, and it’s essential that educators and school staff are able to provide them the full support they need to be successful.

The Trevor Project is the leading suicide prevention and crisis intervention organization for LGBTQ+ young people. Trevor offers 24/7 crisis services, connecting highly trained counselors with LGBTQ+ young people whenever they need support. To drive prevention efforts, The Trevor Project also operates robust research, advocacy, education, and peer support programs. The Trevor Project envisions a world where all LGBTQ+ young people feel safe, seen, and accepted exactly as they are.

LGBTQ+ young people are not inherently prone to suicide risk because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Rather, they are placed at higher risk by the mistreatment and stigmatization they experience in society. According to [The Trevor Project's 2024 U.S. National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ+ Young People](#), 39% of LGBTQ young people seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year, including more than half of transgender and nonbinary young people. In Ohio, 43% of LGBTQ+ youth seriously considered suicide and 12% attempted suicide in 2024. However, **LGBTQ+ young people who had access to spaces that affirmed their sexual orientation and gender identity – including schools – [reported lower rates](#) of attempting suicide than those who did not.**

This new policy would force school staff and teachers to disclose a student’s transgender identity to their parents or guardians without the student’s consent, even if there is fear of abuse. While it is ideal for schools to work with parents in supporting all young people, if an LGBTQ+ young person isn’t accepted at home they often seek support at school. This bill would mean that students would need to choose to be outed to their parents in order to use

their name or the correct pronouns – or simply seek support from trusted adults as they navigate their identity – or to repress their identity at school. Both options could cause harm to the young person.

If this bill is passed, it will increase suicide risk among LGBTQ+ students here in Ohio.

Schools play an important role in creating positive spaces for LGBTQ+ youth, and it's essential that young people attend schools where they feel safe and that they can be themselves. Further, transgender and nonbinary youth who reported having their pronouns respected had lower rates of attempting suicide compared to those who did not.

Researchers at The Trevor Project [published a study](#) in the peer-reviewed journal, *Nature Human Behaviour*, that found anti-transgender state-level laws – similar to HB 8 – directly **cause up to a 72% increase in suicide attempts among transgender and nonbinary young people**. Further, The overwhelming majority (92%) of LGBTQ+ young people in Ohio said their well-being was negatively impacted due to recent politics. The public support for, and potential passage of, HB 8 only further contributes to these devastating outcomes.

Opposition to inclusive school practices is part of a broader movement to not only oppose LGBTQ+-inclusive policies but also to undermine the rights of gay and transgender Americans by eroding existing protections for LGBTQ+ people in schools, at work, at home, and in public accommodations. **This has nothing to do with parental rights in education.**

It's crucial that we continue to foster inclusive and affirming school environments for LGBTQ+ youth, and as members of the Senate Education Committee, you have the opportunity to model inclusive and affirming behavior by rejecting this cruel, unfounded, and discriminatory bill.

LGBTQ+ youth should be able to thrive in schools that are supportive and affirming of all students. Please vote no on HB 8. Should you have any questions or if we can be of any assistance regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me at Gabby.doyle@thetrevorproject.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gabby Doyle', with a stylized, cursive script.

Gabrielle Doyle
Senior Manager of State Advocacy
The Trevor Project