

PDF Version of Testimony for 12.9.24 hearing on HB 8 in Ohio Senate Education Committee.

Hi there.

I work and live in Columbus, Ohio. I've done so for the past 7 years now, and I've been a resident of Ohio all my life. I am writing today to express my opposition to HB8.

I urge the Senate committee to reject HB 8 and support safe, inclusive education for every child.

Forcing disclosure of sensitive information about students, particularly in cases where it could put them in harm's way, is completely unacceptable.

This proposal will censor classroom discussions, making schools less supportive and inclusive for all students.

The viewpoints and lived experiences of other religions and cultures are not considered in this legislation. It will affect everyone in the state of Ohio, and Ohio does not have a homogenous culture or religion.

Life is inherently non-binary. Many cultures have ancient histories of non-binary expression. The Hijra's of India, the Muxes of Oaxaca, and the Mahu of Hawaii, just to name a few.

(<https://rpl.hds.harvard.edu/religion-context/case-studies/gender/third-gender-and-hijras>)

(<https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/muxes-mexico-gender-binary-cec/index.html#:~:text=Muxes%2C%20a%20group%20long%20recognized,deeply%20entrenched%20in%20Western%20society.>)

(<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/hawaii-museum-revisits-history-gender-fluid-healers-rcna37284>)

What is HB8 even doing here if not providing the mechanism to eradicate adolescent's ability to express their true selves and interact with people in a meaningfully socially transitioned way? A quote from the House, on HB68, that speaks to this: "This bill is not about social transitioning," -Rep. Click. This quote occurred around 40 minutes before directly saying that the school-related portion of that bill forcing school staff to out trans youth to parents was because there are schools that support the social transition of trans youth during school hours.

What is the legislatures' expected outcome when an educator follows this proposal, immediately contacts a parent about their child's desire to transition their pronouns, and the parent supports their child's choice?

It's a parent's right to support their child's social transition. Do that child's pronouns become 'sexuality content' to be censored? Does that support a parent's rights?

It seems like this proposal is strictly written from the viewpoint that parents will 'put their children in their place' and restrict their self-expression. The proposal does not support ally parents in any meaningful way.

This proposal, and what it opens the doors for, seeks to completely erase transness, queerness, and eventually homosexuality broadly, all together, let alone just from adolescents. It seems to conjecture

that if the ability adolescent's have to be their authentic queer selves can be squashed, then there won't be any queer selves. That simply isn't true.

I am concerned about government overreach in education, I believe this negatively affects all students & schools, and I want to emphasize the practical burden this could place on schools and educators.

This proposal would replace local decision-making with rigid state mandates and divert educators' time from teaching to bureaucratic compliance.

This proposal is a waste of resources, and places focus on unnecessary bureaucracy instead of investing in education.

I do not believe it is appropriate to dismiss the obvious cause and effect of bills like HB8 as slippery-slope fallacy. There is a clear precedent of moving from small transgender youth bans to larger wholesale trans bans. I don't think I need to describe the logical end point of these initiatives, but it certainly isn't acknowledging that trans people are people, and that all people need love, care, support, and acceptance.

Don't let Ohio become one of the worst places in the union to be a young person, let alone a young trans person. HB68 and SB104 made Ohio one of the most dangerous places to be a youth. Don't let HB8 add to the repression in our state.

Every youth is entitled to their own identity, transgender or otherwise. Please, I demand that you vote NO on HB8.

Thank you for your time.