

Members of the Ohio State Senate Education Committee,

If passed, HB 8 will do immense harm to students, schools, and communities. It introduces unnecessary risk of diminished educational outcomes by allowing for students to be arbitrarily excluded from educational and empathy-building information. It poses a risk to the safety and well-being of students who might not or might not immediately disclose information of a personal and sensitive nature at home precisely because of the fear of the physical and/or psychological consequences that might be visited upon them as a result of such disclosures. Children need places where they feel safe being themselves in order to explore and share who they are in healthy ways. If home is that place, they're already sharing these things with their parents. If it isn't, then they need a place that is safe and offers services that don't just report back to what may be an unsafe home environment without that child's, that person's, consent. HB 8 delivers no positive outcomes, but instead exposes children to risks of diminished outcomes and abuse while reducing them further into objects possessed by their parents rather than persons in their own right. For the sake of the children it will endanger and for the sake of all children who would be deprived of opportunities to learn valuable information about themselves and others, I respectfully ask that you oppose HB 8.