

Dear Chairperson Andrew Brenner,

Thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony. My name is Christine Ferens, and I am a concerned citizen of Ohio and a Mental Health professional. I am strongly opposed to HB-8.

HB 8 puts the privacy and well-being of Ohio students at risk. It is imperative that trust between young people and a teacher or other school staff member remain intact; for students who do not feel safe at home, sometimes they have nowhere else to turn but to a teacher or guidance counselor.

While we hope that every young person could rely on immediate family members and parents, we unfortunately understand that is not the reality. These generalized parameters cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach for supporting our young people, as for many students – especially LGBTQ+ students – they will do just the opposite.

Additionally, HB 8's vague language regarding "sexuality content" would chill vital conversations about sexual orientation, gender identity, and diversity in family or relationship dynamics. It is also wholly unneeded. Current law in Ohio already has provisions relating to parental notification and review.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful and dangerous bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to submit written testimony.

Ohio Voting Citizen
Christine Ferens, M.Ed
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