

Against House Bill 8, December 2024
The Rev. Alice Connor
St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, Anderson Township

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair O'Brien, and Ranking Member Ingram, I write to implore you not to pass House Bill 8 out of committee. I write, if I'm completely honest, with weariness and exhaustion and a significant amount of fear that you won't listen to me and hundreds of others.

I am a Christian clergy person, ordained 20 years, having served in parishes and campus ministry, all of which have included trans folk of deep faith. I write today to say simply that transgender folk are made in the image and likeness of God just as the rest of us are.

When I say trans people are made in the image and likeness of God, I am speaking from extensive education in theology, church history, and Biblical studies as well as long experience. I could write you a treatise on why trans people are not sinners, are not predators, are in fact the victims and the oppressed who the entire Bible entreats us to protect. But that's been done, by even more educated and faithful people than myself.

Today, in this short note, I am begging you not to continue the trend that this legislature has begun in error. Not only in error, Senators, but in sin. This legislature has taken away our parental rights and our kids' healthcare with HB 68, our kids' social connection through youth sports in that same bill, their bathrooms with SB 104/HB 183, and now make it illegal to even talk about them at schools.

My friends, my fellow Ohioans, parents and even professed Christians—these kids and adults are not a threat. They are your siblings in Christ. They just want to live their lives. Every one of my trans friends and my trans child will tell you that the moment they were called by their new name and accepted for who they understand they are—self-determinism if I've ever seen it—they experienced such profound relief and gratitude. I have seen them absolutely bloom.

Please, please, literally for the love of Jesus the Christ, do not pass HB8 out of committee.

Thank you.