

December 9, 2024

Re: HB 8 – Opposing Testimony

Dear Chair Brenner and Vice Chair O'Brien,

My name is Megan Kafka, and I've lived in Ohio since 2010. I'm so glad HB 8 will put an end to the reign of terror straight people have unleashed upon our schools. It's amazing that parents will have to be notified of boyfriend-girlfriend relationships in a book before it's assigned to their kids—no more *Romeo and Juliet*, hooray! It's incredible that we'll be getting rid of straight practices like crowning a prom king and queen—talk about forcing gender roles onto students, yuck. And it's fantastic beyond belief that female teachers won't be allowed to talk openly about their husbands and vice versa, because that mean kids would know that their educators are *straight*. The horror!

Wait. That's not what HB 8 will do, is it. No—it will just put the kibosh on “sexuality content” that involves non-straight people.

HB 8 won't do anything to stop kids from being gay, or queer, or transgender. People have been all these things and more since the dawn of time. All HB 8 will do is make it hard for Ohio students to have safe, trusted relationships with educators and leaders. It will add even more strain and tension to an already strained and tense education system. It will go against the Whole Child Framework of the Department of education, which emphasizes “equality and [the] specific needs of individual students” as the core tenets of our strategic plan for education.

And it's pretty darn scary that your bill will force LGBT kids to be outed to their parents. Think about the biggest secret you ever held from your parents when you were in school—maybe you snuck out of the house, got a speeding ticket, or bombed a test. Imagine how scared you were that your parents would find out. Now multiply that fear by a factor of one thousand. You're still not even close to the fear these poor kids have when they think about being outed to their parents against their will. HB 8 will make their nightmare a reality, and for what? How is harming our kids in any way a net good for Ohio?

As our representatives, you have a lot of power. You should use it for good, not to force us apart or to attack vulnerable kids. If it's not clear already, I oppose HB 8 in the strongest possible terms. If you really care about all Ohioans—and not just the straight ones—then you should, too.

Sincerely,  
Megan Kafka