

Opponent Written Testimony on HB 8

December 9, 2024

Dear Ohio Senate Education Committee,

My name is Laurie Albright. I am a recently retired School Psychologist in Ohio. I am writing in opposition to HB 8. While well meaning in intent, the actual impact of this proposed law will have devastating consequences, including deaths of students.

Ohio has an obligation to protect the well being and safety of all youth, including LGBTQ+ youth. Singling out LGBTQ+ youth, requiring school staff to immediately report any conversations that suggest a student may be exploring their identity, without student consent, is unethical. It is opposed by most state educational organizations that interact with students daily and understand the dynamics involved. Unless there are immediate safety concerns, the ethical course is for the student to have input into the timing of sharing with their parents. Many families are open and loving to their children; however, some parents have and will throw their child out on the street if they suspect their child has an identity that is not in line with their ideas. School personnel have an obligation to child safety. This proposed law requires them to disregard this duty.

In my opinion, it is not possible to write a law that addresses this issue in a way that responds to the variety of children and families that reside in our great state of Ohio. First, do no harm. Please vote NO on HB 8.