

Opponent Testimony for HB 8
Ohio Senate Education Committee
December 9, 2024
Mireya Zamudio, Early Literacy Interventionist
Chapter One

Chair Andrew Brenner, Vice Chair Sandra O'Brien, Ranking Member Catherine Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee.

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Mireya Zamudio (they/she) and I have lived most of my life in Ohio. Currently, I'm an Early Literacy Interventionist working with second grade students in the Whitehall City School District. Previously, I worked in childcare for almost eight years in Worthington. I have dedicated my professional life to education and early learners. I am writing today to testify as an opponent of HB8.

This summer I had the honor of working at Sunbury Urban Farm as an Outdoor Playspace Program Specialist for their day camp for children ages 5-13. This was one of the few places I have worked at where LGBTQIA+ identities were not only respected for staff but for the children who attended as well. It was a beautiful experience of creating safe and fun learning environments for children. LGBTQIA+ people are often targets for discrimination and education spaces should be free from discrimination to allow children to grow and learn safely with autonomy to their privacy and without censorship of LGBTQIA+ identities. This policy would directly impact myself and other educators and primarily students in a very harmful way as HB 8 requires schools to "out" students to their parents and requires schools to notify parents of any "sexuality content" (i.e. mentions of LGBTQIA identities). I care deeply for children and their education and as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community myself, I am not going anywhere. I will not stop fighting to continue to create spaces in education for educators and students that reflect experiences like the ones I had this summer at Sunbury Urban Farm. Students deserve educators and education that reflects their identities and they deserve safety and security in their classrooms just as educators deserve to teach without fear of these bills that threaten to censor education.

I am writing to ask the Ohio Senate Education Committee to respect students' privacy and autonomy. Do not censor education in Ohio and do not move forward with this forced outing bill. I ask that you please consider my testimony and vote no on bill HB8.

Thank you.