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My name is Mina Ivy Ashton. I am a pre-Social Work student at Bowling Green State University. My dream is to have some kind of positive social and political change in the future, and be an advocate for minorities voices. The system needs change, we need to make schools safer and more equitable for all children. I speak from personal experience when I say school sometimes is the only safe space kids can have, that's how school was for me. Social workers and counselors act as that safety net for children, it gives them a trusted adult to talk to about personal issues that they may not feel comfortable or even safe to share with their parents. If you take away that confidentiality, you are taking away some children's safety. Not everyone is privileged to have kind supportive parents who can listen and understand their child. Especially children who identify as LGBTQ+, I have known many people during my middle and high school years who did not have safe home lives. Many of whom were trans, or gay, and if their parents found out they would have been disowned, or worse. I, myself am queer, when I tried to come out to my mother as a teen she threatened to disown me, but I knew at school I had the love and support of the counselors, it kept me sane, and sometimes even alive. If children are stripped of that safety at school, their mental health will decline, and suicide rates will go up. If you care about children's safety, mental health, and wellbeing, please do not pass Ohio House Bill 8. I cannot bear about another child taking their life because they cannot get help.

- Clara

(she/her)