

Opponent Testimony for HB8

December 9, 2024

Casandra Helm

Esteemed members of the Ohio State Senate and whom it may concern:

My name is Casandra Helm, I am an 46 years old white, cisgender female that does identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community. I reside in Columbus, Ohio and have since 2016. I came from Louisville Kentucky and after living here for a few years quickly realized how much more diverse and welcoming Columbus and Ohio surrounding areas are. I was able to connect with other people in the community and decided to move my career to working with the community more directly. I left my job as a Clinical Liaison for the largest complex rehab equipment company in the country, to become a manager at the local LBBTQIA+ community center, Stonewall Columbus. Along my path I have come across many people but none like the trans community. Their resilience, fight and dedication are like no other, but they are tired. They have fought for so long to be able to be their genuine authentic true selves. Each year that the gay/lesbian community was able to obtain more rights our trans siblings were told to wait their time would come. We first had to work on equality for the cisgender people, cause the world wasn't quite ready. Well now here we are in 2024, and we are going backwards not forward.

I personally have a nephew that is trans. When he was younger, and not yet living his authentic life he had signs of frustration, irritability, and eventually suicidal thoughts. He was admitted inpatient at least 4 times with thoughts of wanting to harm himself and no longer live. My brother, his father, was at his wits end and was not ready to see his son as his true self. He called me upset about a recent inpatient stay that my nephew was having, and I asked him one thing, "Would you rather have a living son or a dead daughter." From that moment forward he had a son, and he loves his son. They have been able to grow and my nephew has evolved into an amazing confident and happy adult man, that may loose his affirming care.

I am asking that you please oppose HB8 on the reason that it isn't anyone's business what anyone does with their body, or how they feel in their body. The state should not be placing itself in any of these decisions.

I appreciate your time and consideration.

Casandra L. Helm
Casandra Helm

502-767-0454

chelm@stonewallcolumbus.org