

Testimony of Montgomery L. Gray  
Before the Senate Education Committee  
Senator Andrew O. Brenner, Chair

December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024

To: Chair A. O. Brenner, Vice Chair S. O'Brien, and Ranking Member C. D. Ingram:

My name is Montgomery Gray and I am a graduate student at The Ohio State University, where I study theoretical chemistry. I am submitting this testimony as a private citizen (**not** as a representative to Ohio State in any form), in **opposition to the HB 8**, even in its current amended form.

HB 8 would require that schools notify parents of their child(ren) identifying as a gender other than their birth gender and/or of their sexuality. This is done through language such as: requiring districts to notify parents of “changes to a student's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being”. This is code for teachers/administrators to out students that identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community to their parents. This type of requirement would have detrimental effects on the mental health, well-being, and even the safety of the transgender, nonbinary, gender diverse, other LGBTQ+ children.

Unfortunately, many LGBTQ+ youth do not have affirming home environments. This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that nearly 30% of LGBTQ+ youth face homelessness/housing instability<sup>1</sup> (this homelessness is usually from the nonacceptance from a family member). Additionally, many transgender youths are at a much higher rate of suicide (25%) compared to their cis peers (5% and 11% for males and females respectively).<sup>2,3,4,5</sup> There are real consequences for a law that hurts some of our most vulnerable children, with an end result being very real: more **dead children**. This is something that I hope everyone can be truly against, no matter ones stance on LGBTQ+ issues, and it is an outcome that can be avoided if the right actions are taken. This is evident through multiple studies showing that the passing of anti-trans bills, such as the HB 8, caused a notable increase in suicide rates.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, the data show that gender-affirming care is highly beneficial for LGBTQ+ youths.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, an endorsement of a bill like HB 8 is one that informed people should not be making.

On another note, this bill has a large oversight that could lead to unfair targeting and punishment on our Ohio teachers. HB 8 creates a pipeline for the public to micromanage and control our educators. In a time where our state is having a hard time hiring and retaining educators,<sup>8</sup> we should be doing everything in our power to make teachers jobs easier not harder. Not only this, but having mandatory reporting would cause distrust between the students and their teachers making for a worse educational environment. Overall, HB 8 is a bill that will endanger children's health, both mental and physical, and also ruin teacher student relationships hampering the educational environment. HB 8 helps no one and provides absolutely zero educational purpose and in turn should be dropped from this bill.