

Committee Chair Andrew Brenner, Ranking Member Catherine Ingram, and members of the Ohio Education Committee,

My name is Amy Davis. I am a parent in Ohio and I am strongly opposed to House Bill 8. This is my home state, I have always valued the way our state was able to balance Red/Blue and be a beacon to all with true Midwest welcoming. But House Bill 8 takes a hard right turn in a way that will harm all schools, staff, students, and families.

Families come in all shapes and sizes, there is no one template to value above any other. Pretending there are not LGBTQ parents, students, and staff with individual lives will not make them disappear into a closet. I see no reason to marginalize productive and loving families as if their lives are less valuable. I trust teachers to handle delicate and unique situations as they arise.

If a parent doesn't know their own child well enough nor have gained the trust of their child to know their child is struggling with something weighing on their heart, there is no reason to put that parent connection problem onto teachers. Teachers just want to teach math and history and literacy and show respect to learners. The best teachers know how to meet a learner where they are and build them up from there.

The even more troubling portion of House Bill 8 is the directive to separate and specify LGBTQ books and perspectives in curriculum, as if those perspectives are dangerous and not a part of the human condition and a part of our multi-faceted society. This segregation is absurd and impossible to even attempt to showcase all voices across many cultures while avoiding one narrative. I can't forbid my child's math teacher from teaching division, simply because I don't agree with division, that would leave them ill equipped to be successful in all future math classes. Are there any other groups being targeted and silenced?

If there are members of a restrictive religion within a classroom, that religion does not have the authority to silence anyone else based on their own beliefs. They may homeschool, online school, private school, etc. But they may not silence teachers, students, or authors. If a parents thinks their child needs to be shut out from differing opinions then they may follow the lead of the Amish communities, they have their own education laws for a reason, they did not force their ways onto the rest of society.

I urge you not to take Ohio backwards towards segregation and intolerance. Educate our young people from all perspectives possible. Oppose House Bill 8.

Amy Davis