

My name is Basil Thome, I am 21 years old, and I come from a family of teachers. I am also openly queer. I am opposed to House Bill 8 for a number of reasons, with the most pressing being the danger it would bring to children of the LGBTQ+ community if passed. Gender identity only becomes sexual content when we sexualize it, and this bill does that heavily. We begin learning about how we fit into society and our communities as kindergarteners, or even earlier. We begin understanding concepts of gender relating to ourselves at roughly age 3. I do not trust every individual parent over an overwhelming majority of educators and doctors to decide what is best for their child's well-being and mental health, especially when this bill, in no way, shape, or form, considers how the well-being and mental health of the parent may cause easily preventable detriment to a child, a furthermore to a community. Having safe adults outside of the home is how so many children are able to develop independence and emotional maturity. Having a community to help raise a child and prevent isolation and abuse from occurring is vital in raising strong, kind, and good Americans. Stripping autonomy from children because parents are scared of the unknown or a lack of control, when so many kids are already unable to stand up for themselves, does not a brave country make, and yet we've deemed ourselves the home of such virtue. This bill would be extremely harmful to educators, to children, to communities, and to the family unit. Please oppose House Bill 8.