

Greetings,

My committee witness slip is attached, and below is my testimony.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Jeremy Stoll,

Testimony:

As an educator, myself, I must note that the Unsafe Students Act is fundamentally unsafe for students in Ohio. First, the bill does not require a standard of medical accuracy for instructional materials, and it limits access to accurate sex ed. As documented by the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), among many others, lack of access to comprehensive sex ed leads to worse outcomes for young people, including increased risk of STIs. In addition, the oversight outlined in this bill will foment distrust of educators by micromanaging the topics and techniques on which they are trained experts. It fundamentally will make it more difficult for students and families to build and maintain safe relationships, and our already-strained education system will be further weighted with the challenges that this bill unnecessarily brings. In short, this bill seems likely to increase harms for students across the board.

Furthermore, the lack of clear definitions in the bill - especially an intentionally vague conception of 'sexuality' - seem designed to do harm to LGBTQ+ students and their families. Requiring a strict reporting process for changes in student mental, emotional, and/or physical health or well-being ignores the complexities of students learning who they are as they grow up - and the difficulties for parents in navigating those moments where they are called to support their kin. Indeed, the vague standards of this bill go against the Whole Child Framework of the Department of Education that emphasizes the specific needs of individual students. Sharing information in the ways outlined in the bill is disrespectful to all people involved - families, children, and educators - who should be allowed to manage these conversations themselves.

Finally, the state of Ohio already has regulations to govern parental notice, review, and the ability to opt out of instruction. Public schools must establish policies to allow parents to be actively involved in education, and districts already establish parental advisory committees or other strategies to enable curricular review. Federal leadership - conservative and liberal alike - has rejected this kind of legislation due to its vague and often harmful intent, as well as its unclear and overly expansive scope. It politicizes education, does not deliver resources to schools or families in need, and does great harm to already marginalized LGBTQ+ students.

Please reject this bill - for the sake of all students, families, and educators in our state.

