

Opponent Testimony for Senate Bill 83
Senate Committee on Workforce and Higher Education
April 19, 2023

Luke Knull, Undergraduate Student
Ohio State University

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Rulli, Ranking Member Ingram, and Members of the Workforce and Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Luke Knull. I am an undergraduate student studying physics at The Ohio State University. I am here to express a deep concern for the contents of the Senate Bill. Specifically, I am in opposition to Sec. 3345.87.

As a lifelong citizen of the state of Ohio, and a student at Ohio's flagship public university, I hope to offer the perspective not of an activist, but as a member of the community of which I am a part of. This bill calls for the elimination of divisions in housing based upon group identities. The consequences of these actions—which may seem distant to our legislative body—would deeply and personally affect the students of our universities, specifically our LGBT community. Many of my closest friends live and lived among housing based upon their identity because they knew the people there would be accepting of who they are. University education is not something done alone—you form a community of those around you, and where you live is no exception. Opening up many LGBT students to social ostracization, which, I assure you will be the consequence of this section, would be an attack upon the livelihoods of my friends and my loved ones.

Students are fickle beings, pushed to their limits in new ways as they enter adulthood. Forcing LGBT members, at their most vulnerable time in life, to risk a life of degradation and discrimination, would be more than irresponsible. It would repel Ohioans from the state; it would damn thousands who chose to stay to both depression and a worse education as a consequence of this. Most importantly, to put it bluntly, because the point must be made, it would place the blood of many LGBT Ohioans upon the hands of those who, in support of this bill, decided their lives were worth less than solving a problem that simply does not exist. LGBT Ohioans who live in separated housing don't live in a bubble—that would be an undeveloped and naive view of the lives of a college student. Nor do LGBT Ohioans wish to live in a bubble, they simply wish to live.

Housing which is based on sexual and gender identity are not just conveniences, they are necessities, in ways that I hope are now apparent. Our public universities should be locations where students of all backgrounds and beliefs can be educated, something this bill claims to advocate for, but would result in the exact opposite. I implore that you, for the sake of your constituents and the Ohioans it would affect, please, consider my testimony, and vote no on any and all versions of this bill that includes this section. Thank you.