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**State Representative Joshua E. Williams**  
**Ohio House of Representatives**

Chairwoman Fowler Arthur, Vice-Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the House Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 190, the Given Name Act. I would also like to thank my joint sponsor, Representative Newman, for his work in introducing this legislation.

This legislation would establish clear, consistent rules surrounding the use of a student's legal name and pronouns in Ohio's public school system. This legislation achieves an appropriate balance between the protection of parental authority over significant decisions affecting their child and the rights of students to be addressed in a manner consistent with their legal identity.

At a glance, this legislation would:

- Require school employees and contractors to address unemancipated minors only by the name and pronouns matching the student's birth certificate, unless they were to receive written permission from the student's parents/guardians
- Prohibit schools from penalizing staff or students for failure to use names or pronouns inconsistent with an individual's legal name or biological sex
- Mandate that any request by a student for an accommodation to affirm their gender identity be reported by the employee to school administrators, who then must notify the student's parent or guardian
- Authorize Ohio's DEW to investigate complaints, withhold 10% of state foundation aid for continued noncompliance, and provide injunctive relief and recovery of attorney fees when violations are found

Through these measures, the bill ensures that parents remain fully informed and engaged in significant matters concerning a child's identity in the school setting, while also protecting the free speech of educators who follow these rules.

This legislation affirms the long-standing principle of parental rights and consent under Ohio law. Permitting schools to alter a child's name or pronouns without notifying the parents would undermine this core principle. Currently, many districts have informal policies that can vary dramatically. This type of approach can cause confusion and uncertainty for educators. HB 190 provides clear and consistent guidelines on name and pronoun use for staff, while respecting the rights of all our parents in Ohio.

Chairwoman Fowler Arthur, Vice-Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the Education Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 190. I welcome any questions you may have.