

**Written Testimony of Albert Earl**

In Support of Ohio House Bill 302

Ohio House Judiciary Committee

October 8, 2025

Chair Thomas, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Isaacsohn, and members of the House Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. As you know, technology has transformed how we serve our community. It's opened doors, connecting kids to mentors, job applications, and learning tools they never would have found otherwise. But it's also brought new risks that we can't ignore. HB 302 addresses those risks while protecting the opportunities our young people need to thrive.

As a qualified mental health specialist, as well as a media educator I am well-versed with technology and how students interact online. Whether it's helping a student log in for a virtual class, apply for a summer job online, or connect with a mentor through a video call, I have worked with students with a variety of backgrounds. I am aware of the impact of children and their online exposure, whether it be images, language or being influenced to provide critical information that can put them in harm's way.

With that increased reliance on digital tools comes the challenge of making sure the online environment is as safe as the one we strive to create inside our building. House Bill 302 is a step in that direction. It equips parents with tools to oversee the spaces where kids are most likely to encounter risks, while making sure young people can still access the resources that help them grow and succeed.

In a community setting, disruption to those resources has real consequences. A teen who can't access a mental health app, a college prep tool, or an online training program loses opportunities that can make a difference in their future. HB 302 helps avoid those disruptions by keeping its safeguards focused and proportionate.

The bill also fosters shared responsibility. Protecting children online isn't a task for parents alone, but it's something that requires engagement from community leaders, educators, and the companies that create the platforms our youth use every day. HB 302 sets expectations without stifling the innovation that brings us better tools and programs.

Its privacy protections are equally important. Limiting information-sharing to the bare minimum needed for safety is not only the smart approach, it's the one that builds trust among families who are already cautious about sharing personal details.

For the young people who walk through our doors every day, safety and opportunity go hand in hand. HB 302 supports both, and I ask for your support in moving it forward.

Sincerely,

Albert Earl

Qualified Mental Health Specialist