

Are girls OK?
I ask today!
TODAY I AM THEIR VOICE -
When 39% of Ohio middle school girls are bullied online
the answer is -
-NO WE ARE NOT OK!
Repeatedly bullied because of how we look!
The names we are called!
The shame we feel!
The hurt that brews inside!
It's awful how these feelings collide!
How do we survive?
NO, WE ARE NOT OK!

Are girls OK?
I ask today!
When 27% of girls were chronically absent from school, I would say NO WE ARE NOT OK!
When not going to school seems like a safer bet!
As our grades suffer, our educational goals are NOT MET!
When school is a place where we don't feel safe!
We don't return, therefore, we don't learn!
Are we doomed to never graduate?
Never escaping our lot?
Never elevating from this poor spot?

Are girls OK?
I ask today!
When 18% of high school girls report experiencing sexual dating violence, I would say,
NO WE ARE NOT OK!
A date turns into a violent episode-
Who do we turn to to share this load?
Do we suffer alone and run the risk of repetition?
The shame and guilt gags our voices into submission!
NO! Girls ARE NOT OK!

How do we escape all this doom and gloom?
That girls my age have to consume?
Where do we go to counteract these norms?
GIRL SCOUTS IS OUR PEACE FROM THE STORM!
THERE is a better way for girls to overcome the ills of today!
I have found ACCEPTANCE in my GIRL SCOUTS Troop!
There IS HOPE in Girl Scouts to end this sad loop!

As a girl today -

Girl Scouts has shown me the way!

It's a place where I'm INCLUDED and not bullied!

Where my actions and my behavior determine my value, not the shape of my body, not the style of my clothes, and not my popularity!

All girls are accepted in Girl Scouts!

Whether:

poor or rich,

White or black, thick or small, OR

short or tall!

As a girl today, Girl Scouts provides a place to enjoy learning and to celebrate gaining NEW SKILLS!
From badges and honors and money making cookie businesses - IT's A CAN NOT MISS opportunity to grow!

They celebrate my wins WITH ME!

And I am applauded for being smart and goal oriented!

As a Girl Scout today, I am taught:

- how to defend myself,
- how to have civil conflict, and
- how to take care of myself in difficult circumstances!

VIOLENCE AGAINST ME IS NEVER TOLERATED!

Thank you Girl Scouts for making sure we are OK!

Thank you Girl Scouts for investing in our best interest!

Thank you Girl Scouts for creating an environment for girls to feel:

- Welcomed,
- Safe,
- Supported, and
- Loved!

Thru Girl Scouts - YES GIRLS ARE OK!



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Education Committee

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Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and Members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Tammy Wharton, President & Chief Executive Officer Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland. You just heard from Jasmine- a shining example of the leadership, confidence, and voice that Girl Scouts helps girls develop every day across our state.

We are grateful for the \$400,000 per fiscal year included in the House-passed version of HB96. Today, we respectfully request an additional \$400,000 per fiscal year to expand our Trailblazers in Training: Preparing Girls for Tomorrow's Workforce program. This initiative equips girls with essential skills in STEM, leadership, and career readiness. With this investment, we can take the program statewide, creating and sustaining new troops in underserved communities from urban centers to Appalachian Ohio.

By supporting Girl Scouts, you're helping prepare the next generation of Ohio's workforce and leaders. Thank you for your time and consideration, and I welcome any questions you may have.