

Dear Senators,

I am writing to ask you to oppose the budget bill currently moving through the Ohio Senate. As written, it contains numerous provisions that target LGBTQ+ Ohioans without providing any legitimate benefit. Forcing transgender and nonbinary people to carry ID that displays their sex as assigned at birth opens them up to increased danger of discrimination and harassment from those who disapprove of their existence. I know transgender and nonbinary Ohioans, and they are fundamentally good citizens who work hard, pay their taxes, and try to live their lives like anyone else. They don't deserve to be targeted in this way.

This focus on policing gender roles also endangers cisgender people, especially women, by encouraging the public to go after anyone who doesn't fit the gender norm. For example, the recent fearmongering about transwomen using women's bathrooms has led to numerous instances of cisgender women (those who identify with their birth sex) being attacked as trans simply because they have short hair or other characteristics that their assailants perceived as masculine. As written, this bill contributes to a climate of fear that endangers cisgender women instead of protecting them.

Another provision that would be particularly harmful is the one requiring libraries to keep media with LGBTQ+ themes restricted to "adults only" areas. This provision sends the message that LGBTQ+ people are inherently obscene and that any acknowledgement of our lives, families, and relationships is akin to pornography. This is a ridiculous stance that clearly stems from anti LGBTQ+ animus, particularly at a time when many young people are being raised by LGBTQ+ parents or otherwise engaging with LGBTQ+ people in their daily lives. Media with LGBTQ+ content should be judged by the same standards as media with heterosexual content instead of being stigmatized as uniquely prurient or dangerous.

To conclude, LGBTQ+ Ohioans deserve the same respect as straight Ohioans. Please do the right thing and oppose any version of this bill that targets LGBTQ+ people.

Sincerely,

Mary Sanderson