

Opponent Testimony for SB 1
House Economic and Workforce Committee
May 8, 2023

Alisa P. Ramakrishnan, Ph.D.
DLA Piper, LLC

Chairman D.J. Swearington, Senator Bill Reineke, and members of the House Economic and Workforce Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Alisa Ramakrishnan. I am a patent agent at DLA Piper, LLC, and was a stay-at-home mother for 10 years. I have two children, both gender non-conforming, ages 17 and 12. I am expressing concern about SB1 and its negative effect on the well-being of children in schools.

My oldest child had a friend in high school who was lesbian, but was afraid to tell her parents because they were very conservative and did not believe LGBTQ people were real. When her parents found out, they moved her to a highly conservative school in downtown Columbus where she would be forced out of such ideas. My child has not heard anything from her since – she was forced to drop all communication with her friends.

One of my friends, who is religiously conservative, texted me a few months ago to express concerns about my child, who is LGBTQ. She sent me a long story that was in the news about a child who had friends who introduced them to drugs and pornography at a young age, probably about 14, and that this child now wanted to be called a name and gender different than what was identified at birth. In deep distress, the parents took the child out of school and cut off all contact with any friends or people that were LGBTQ. The story says that through love and forced behavior patterns, the parents “fixed” the child. My friend thought I should do the same with my child. Isolate them from friends and school, insist on a gender and sexual orientation, and force the child to comply with “love”. My child is not involved with drugs or pornography and has good friends, who are all LGBTQ. Why would I submit them to what amounts to actual torture? This poor child should have been taken to supportive therapy to help them feel loved and safe, not terrified into compliance with a homophobic lifestyle.

Children need a safe space where they can address concerns without fear of being taken away from school and friends. With a Christian conservative government in charge of the Department of Education, how will children who are not conservative Christians be affected? Will parents who want to support their children in a healthy manner be forced to remove their children from public schools and attempt to homeschool them in order to protect them from discrimination and threats? If the Ohio government were liberal instead of conservative Christian, how would conservative Christian parents feel if their children are forced to learn about things they disagreed deeply with?

This bill is a blatant effort for governmental control of education. Are the government elected officials trained educators? It’s like having government control medical care, dictating who should be forcefully sterilized, who should be subjected to clinical trials studying the negative effects of drugs, who should be tortured into affirming agreement with the prejudices of government officials. The government should allow educators to educate, and concern

themselves with providing safe and supportive educational resources for our children, in accordance with the wishes of those of us who pay taxes.

Bills such as these are driven by fear, hate, and ignorance. It places further negative impact on marginalized students, and unfairly targets teachers. I ask that you please consider my testimony and vote no on this bill.

Thank you,

Alisa P. Ramakrishnan