



**Opponent Testimony for House Bill 6  
House Higher Education Committee**

April 26, 2023

*Elaine Schleiffer, Communications Manager, Honesty for Ohio Education*

Chair Young, Ranking Member Miller, and members of the House Higher Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to House Bill 6.

[Honesty for Ohio Education](#) is a nonpartisan, statewide coalition representing more than [50 organizational](#) partners and thousands of students, educators, and Ohioans. Our coalition works to ensure that every student can access the honest, high-quality education grounded in truth, facts, and diverse perspectives that they need to be successful personally, professionally, and as members of Ohio communities.

As a coalition, we believe that education must reflect and celebrate all student identities, lived experiences, and cultures to maximize engagement and achievement. Dismissing bigotry and discrimination, or minimizing their trauma and impact, irrevocably harms individuals and communities, and prevents pathways to needed growth and healing.

House Bill 6 works in direct opposition to honest education, classroom equity, and student rights, and takes aim at the health, safety, and education of Ohio's students.

House Bill 6 singles out some students for different treatment. This bill declares that some students, on the basis of their identity, do not deserve the same access to school programming as their peers.

House Bill 6 advances and supports transphobia in Ohio. The bill targets transgender girls and women students for increased bullying and harassment by naming them as unequal in the eyes

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**Honesty for Ohio Education**

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of the law, and therefore in the eyes of their schools and peers, and prevents them from participating in the sports they love.

Sports are for everyone. Many adult athletes share how participating in school sports helped them develop leadership, confidence, and social connections. Denying this type of youth development to only some students is discriminatory, and demonstrates to the youngest Ohioans that not all people are treated equally.

Justin Morrow, an Ohio native who is now a professional soccer player and co-founder of Black Players for Change, said this to the State Board of Education last year: “Many policies already exist at the local level that guide schools and districts in their interactions with transgender students and their families. These policies work well, and help to expand access to school sports for some of Ohio’s most vulnerable kids. **That inclusivity is important; school sports can change a kid’s life.**”

The Ohio High School Athletic Association and the NCAA have had policies governing student athletics for years that ensure a fair and accessible experience for every student. This bill reverses that history of equitable access, and replaces it with discrimination and bullying. Many Ohio student athletes have testified to the negative impacts this type of legislation will have on them, their teams, and their schools.

Last year many trans young people came to speak directly to you about their experiences, even though coming into this Statehouse and putting their names on the public record increases the hate they have to endure every day. One 13-year-old student athlete said: “Month after month I listen to the school board meetings in my town and it's all about protecting students from people like me. I am just a regular girl trying to live her life, and **having to hear the lies and fearmongering directed at the transgender community is hurtful, and adults should know better.**”

Attacking and marginalizing already vulnerable Ohio students is wrong. Our young people don’t need to be further divided, and they don’t need educators’ and administrators’ time and energy wasted on hate and harm. Policy makers should be focused on strengthening public education and making sure our young people are ready for the challenges they will face in the real, complex, diverse world around them.

**We urge you to vote NO on House Bill 6, and we stand ready to partner with members of this committee to identify policies that protect ALL of Ohio’s kids.**

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