

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to submit my written testimony in opposition to HB 183. This document contains my testimony, and my witness form is attached.

This bill is a blatant attempt to remove protections from gender non-conforming children and adults in Ohio, threatening their health and safety while benefiting no one.

This policy change will do nothing to reduce assault, one of the stated purposes of the bill. Assault is already against the law, so this is a duplication at best. Additionally, there is no evidence supporting a positive correlation between assault frequency and gender-inclusive restrooms. Gender-inclusive restrooms are already in use in many schools, and there are no reported incidents in Ohio of assaults happening in these locations. This bill uses a problem that does not exist as a mask for the desire to dehumanize transgender people.

Furthermore, assessing a student's "biological sex" falls outside the expertise of educators and faculty in Ohio. An article in the Scientific American in October of 2018 revealed that even scientists no longer agree on simple definitions of "biological male" and "biological female," the language used in this bill. Genetic, chromosomal, and genital testing can all reveal different results for one person's gender. The definition of biological sex is not a simple binary, and most school officials lack the training to make these judgments in any reliable and informed way.

Finally, a policy of this nature would endanger gender non-conforming people forced to abide by it. According to an article published by CNN in May of 2019, "restrictive policies draw unwanted attention to trans and gender-nonbinary teens," resulting in a 10% increase in the likelihood of assault compared to their peers. It has also been theorized that fearful students will go to extreme measures to avoid bathroom usage entirely in situations where they don't feel safe, resulting in health concerns like urinary tract infections, bowel blockage, and school absenteeism.

House Bill 183 is a gesture signaling its proponents' allegiance to conservative thinking. While these legislators may harbor personal feelings about gender non-conforming individuals, their emotions and religious inclinations have no place in fair legislation.

I urge the members of the Senate to use your efforts to protect all Ohioans, especially the most vulnerable, in real and concrete ways rather than wasting time on symbolic legislation with no proven benefit to anyone.

Thank you for your time,
Angela Hay