



October 9, 2023

Chair Rep. Young, Vice Chair Rep. Manning, and Ranking Member Rep. Miller, my name is Douglas Berger, and I am President of the Secular Humanists of Western Lake Erie, based in Toledo.

I am writing today to express our group's opposition to House Bill 183 that would prohibit transgender kids and adults from using the public bathrooms that align with their gender identity.

We oppose this discriminatory bill since it reminds us of the dark days of Jim Crow when bathrooms and even drinking fountains were segregated by race and this bill is based on the same kind of false narrative and flimsy evidence that those Jim Crow laws were based on.

We are also tired of members of this legislature passing off irrational religious bigotry as public policy and law. When will the need to impose your religion on others stop?

HB 183 has no factual basis and no data to justify a ban is needed. Most anecdotal stories are made up. The numbers of teachers and people of faith who have been arrested and charged for abusing children far out distance any reported crime due to Trans people using the bathroom that aligns with their gender identity. I am more fearful of a child being alone with a priest or minister than using a bathroom with a Trans person.

We can also promise that the people who introduced this bill and at least three members of this committee have never met a Trans kid and has never talked to the Trans community, but they seem to want to discriminate against Trans people anyway. I'm sure it is easier to discriminate when you never talk to them.

Our members would also like to know who will enforce this ban and how it will be enforced. Will birth certificates be required to be shown or will a school official be designated as a genital checker? Will you have a parent sign a form so their child can have a genital check? If there is no enforcement mechanism, then this proposal is just for show. In fact, it would be used to out Trans kids and bully them.

Adding an unfunded mandate on public schools and colleges that you barely help fund is also something to consider.

In a recent TV interview, a member of this committee said that educational policy should only go toward the academic progress of students, and we shouldn't be introducing social issues into the classroom. How does HB 183 advance academic progress? It doesn't but it sure introduces social issues into the classroom. How will this bill improve the dismal school ranking the state has received recently.

Why don't Trans kids deserve to be protected too?

We ask you to vote no on HB 183.

Douglas Berger – President of Secular Humanists of Western Lake Erie