

Dear Members of the Ohio Legislature,

My name is Jen Ciolino, and I am a resident of Cincinnati, Ohio. I am writing to express my vehement opposition to House Bill 183, which aims to prohibit transgender youth from using bathrooms and locker rooms that align with their gender identity.

As a parent of a transgender child, I have firsthand experience with the struggles that transgender youth face on a daily basis. The physical and mental health risks, along with the threat of violence that my child faces, are not hypothetical; they are real and lived experiences that many transgender individuals endure.

My child has had to fast from food and water just to avoid the deeply uncomfortable, and often terrifying, experience of having to use a bathroom that does not align with their identity. This fasting has led to medical issues, including severe dehydration, requiring medical intervention. This not only affects their health but also serves as a considerable barrier to learning and educational achievement.

The bill suggests that restricting bathroom access is a matter of privacy and safety for other students. However, the bill's proponents have failed to provide any empirical evidence to support this claim. The risk that my transgender child poses to others when using the bathroom is nonexistent, while the risks they face are substantial.

Transgender youth are already disproportionately susceptible to discrimination, bullying, and violence. Policies like HB 183 will only exacerbate these problems, pushing transgender students further to the margins of society. The impact on their mental health and general well-being cannot be overstated.

Additionally, this bill presents insurmountable and, frankly, inappropriate challenges in its enforcement. Individuals can legally change the gender markers on their birth certificates, rendering them ineffective as a means of enforcing this bill. And of course, the very notion of visually inspecting children to determine their "biological sex" is not only a gross invasion of privacy but also completely unacceptable on ethical grounds.

It is crucial to consider the real-world implications of this bill. When laws marginalize an already vulnerable population, we are failing in our responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of all Ohioans. House Bill 183 is not just a policy proposal; it is a direct threat to the health and well-being of transgender youth like my child.

I urge you to stand up for the dignity, health, and safety of all Ohio's students by opposing House Bill 183.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jen Ciolino