

October 17, 2023

Attention Ohio House of Representatives

Re: House Bill 183

Dear Ohio Representatives,

I urge you to pass House Bill 183 to protect the safety, security, mental well-being and first amendment rights of Ohio's children and students. The current public-school policies permitting students to access the bathroom, locker room & overnight lodging accommodations according to their gender identity and not their biological sex places our students in harms way.

In the summer of 2022, male students attending the Olentangy Orange High School sleep away band camp were forced to share their sleeping, restroom and changing areas with two female students for an entire week. The male students and their parents were never informed ahead of time, did not provide consent and were not provided the opportunity to advocate for alternative accommodations. This event caused resentment within the student body as well as loss of trust between parents and the Olentangy School District, who failed terribly to inform parents regarding these policies and continues to undermine parental rights by their refusal to email information home regarding bathroom, locker room and lodging rules.

Another incident at Olentangy Orange High School occurred when two female students walked into a male restroom while two male adults were using the urinals. The male faculty member and male parent volunteer were both exposed to female minors during this encounter. It is my understanding that both adults felt their privacy rights were violated and were made to deal with a very uncomfortable situation.

I am calling on this House of Representatives to return some "common sense" to our public-school buildings, especially those serving minor aged students. The failure to pass House Bill 183 leaves our most vulnerable, our youngest children, as an easy target for sexual predators. Olentangy Local schools permits bathroom use based on gender identity not biological sex, even during "after hours" events such as Friday night football games, weekend tournaments, theatre performances etc. There is a huge risk that a child predator could exploit the facility use rules to hide out in a restroom with the purpose of victimizing a young, unsuspecting child.

Failure to pass House Bill 183 also sends a message to our female and male students that Ohio does not value their own wishes for privacy, especially their personal need for modesty or privacy due to their closely held religious beliefs. Ohio needs to protect the rights of ALL students, not just the vocal minority. I urge you to pass Ohio House Bill 183 to keep all our children safe, support their first amendment rights and help foster a school community of respect rather than resentment.

Respectfully,

Jennifer Feucht / Delaware County Ohio

