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Chair Brenner and members of the Senate Education Committee,

Thank you for your time today. My name is Jennifer Kuhn. I use she/her pronouns, and I am the Director of Community Partnerships and External Relations at Kaleidoscope Youth Center. I've been with Kaleidoscope for over six years, and prior to that I was a communications specialist in the suicide prevention field. Collectively, I have approximately 12 years of communications and marketing experience.

My colleagues, my peers, my mentors, social workers, teachers, educators, students, families, and friends, have all stood before the Ohio House, and stand before you today, with facts and pleas to stop HB8.

I won't rehash all of their information and stories, because you have access to it, so instead, as a communications professional, I want to briefly explore the language and messaging you would be sending by voting in favor of HB8.

Your colleagues in the Government Oversight Committee have been hearing testimony this week around HB68. That is the bill that would strip away lifesaving medical care from trans young people, taking vital health decisions out of the hands of the individual, medical professionals, and the parents. The key part I want to highlight here is "parents." Parents wouldn't have the right to decide what medical procedures are best for their child.

Now here in the Education Committee we are discussing HB8, which has been dubbed the "Parents' Bill of Rights." I hope you can immediately see the incongruence of arguing for parents' rights in one arena, while arguing against them in another. I hope you can see the mixed signals that are being sent to the public when you can't agree on what should be included in the phrase "parents' rights." Instead, since what counts as parents' rights are different between the bills, it becomes clear that the commonality is that they single out LGBTQ+ individuals and communities.



Perhaps instead, HB8 could assert parent's rights without making it questionable for an LGBTQ+ teacher to have a photo of their spouse on their desk. Perhaps, HB8 could assert parent's rights without making it questionable for a trans educator to teach math. Perhaps, HB8 could assert parents' rights without needing to define "sex" - because honestly, what does that have to do with parents' rights? In doing this, perhaps you wouldn't be singling out the LGBTQ+ community, and you could find more consistency in asserting parents' rights.

As currently written, HB8 does nothing to improve education or support students. It does nothing to retain teachers when so many are leaving the classroom. Many of your constituents have attested to as much, yet it feels like their messages are going unheard. If you're not listening to them, then who are you listening to?

In marketing, you want to create a connection with your audience. As an elected official, ideally you create connections with your constituents, taking their wants and needs into consideration as you advocate for your people amongst your peers.

In closing, please listen to the pleas of your constituents - parents, educators, teachers and school counselors - and send the message to all Ohioans that you are listening and vote "no" on HB8.



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