

Dear Chair Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee,

My testimony is in opposition to House Bill 1522. I ask that you give this bill a Do Not Pass.

As a public educator who works with LGBTQIA students on a daily basis, this bill will increase harm to an already vulnerable group of students. I am a staff advisor to my high school's Gender-Sexuality Alliance (GSA), one of the "school programs" that will presumably be prohibited under this bill. Our GSA is a twice-monthly half hour meeting where all students are encouraged to be their authentic selves, discuss local issues facing their communities, and enact student-lead projects to make these communities safer for everyone. Are LGBTQIA students and their allies advocating for tolerance and acceptance really so threatening that the legislature feels compelled to unleash the full extent of the law in their direction? What are the possible benefits in removing access to an optional, student-lead, mental health-focused, social-emotional resource like a GSA besides unnecessary cruelty?

Furthermore, how will this bill be enforced if passed? Will school staff members be given access to medical records to ensure that a student's assigned sex and gender pronouns match? And which overworked school staff member will be tasked with monitoring discussion in hallways, classrooms, and bathrooms to enforce this bill as written? Simply put, this is another instance of the state creating an unenforceable law to solve a problem that doesn't exist, a waste of tax money and school resources already stretched thin. In what reasonable way will this bill benefit the state?

I thank you for your time, consideration, and service to our state.

Best regards,

Jacob Thomas

Public school teacher and GSA Advisor