

Opposition Testimony for HB 1144
Representative Austin Foss, District 44, Architect

Chairman Ruby and Members of the Committee,

My name is Austin Foss, and I am here to testify in opposition to HB 1144. I urge the committee to consider the architectural and safety advantages of incorporating single-use toilet rooms into school designs, as opposed to relying solely on multi-stall bathrooms. Research and real-world evidence show that separate single-use bathrooms significantly enhance safety, reduce bullying, and mitigate other forms of misconduct.

Bathrooms in schools are one of the few private spaces where students can be unobserved. Unfortunately, this privacy has historically made them hotspots for bullying, physical altercations, and other inappropriate behavior, such as substance abuse, sexual misconduct, and vandalism. Reports have documented how these issues not only compromise the safety and well-being of students but also create significant challenges for school administrators tasked with ensuring student safety in shared spaces.

Safety and Anti-Bullying Benefits of Single-Use Bathrooms

1. Enhanced Supervision Without Invasion of Privacy:

Single-use bathrooms allow staff to monitor restroom use more effectively while respecting student privacy. This design prevents students from congregating in secluded areas where bullying, assaults, or vandalism are more likely to occur.

2. Limiting Harmful Interactions:

Multi-stall bathrooms inherently create opportunities for students to harass or intimidate peers. Single-use bathrooms, by design, remove this risk, as only one student occupies the space at a time. This layout fosters a safer environment for all students, particularly those who may feel vulnerable in shared facilities.

3. Reduction in Vandalism and Misconduct:

Bathrooms designed as separate single-use spaces reduce the likelihood of group-based vandalism and misconduct, which is harder to manage in multi-stall restrooms. This architectural choice has been shown to deter students from engaging in destructive or inappropriate behavior.

Conclusion

In summary, I oppose HB 1144, especially where it prohibits a certain restroom design because it fails to address the real safety concerns in school restrooms. Encouraging the

adoption of single-use bathroom designs not only enhances safety and privacy for all students but also reduces opportunities for bullying, vandalism, and misconduct. I urge the committee to prioritize these evidence-based architectural improvements over unsubstantiated regulations.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.