



OHIO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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The OEA will lead the way for continuous improvement of public education while advocating for members and the learners they serve.

June 14, 2023

The Honorable Jason Stephens
77 S. High St., 14th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Speaker Stephens:

On behalf of the 120,000 members of the Ohio Education Association, this letter is to express opposition to House Bill 8. OEA believes the framework established in House Bill 8 unnecessarily entangles state government in regulating communications and relationships between parents and educators. Government mandates on these matters interfere with the professionalism of educators and weaken the principles of local control of public schools.

Chances for student success are of course best when parents, guardians, and other family members are engaged and active in the school community. Quality interaction and involvement includes meeting with educators, volunteering for school activities and trips, participating in Parent-Teacher Associations, and more. However, the effect of House Bill 8 would not be to build stronger parent-educator cooperation. This legislation is more likely to sow distrust between schools and parents by planting the seeds of suspicion and fostering an “us vs. them” mindset. This hostile approach is unnecessary and diverts attention from the critical challenges educators and parents face in meeting the needs of students.

It is also a concern for OEA that House Bill 8 fundamentally disregards educator experience and expertise. Educators are dedicated to teaching and supporting all students—no matter their race, ZIP code, or background. House Bill 8 ignores their ability, in concert with parents, to make decisions based on their experience and expertise about what is best for students.

Finally, OEA is concerned about the recent amendments to House Bill 8 targeting LGBTQ+ students and staff. These changes disregard the statutory protections established under Title IX for LGBTQ+ students and could potentially expose educators and school districts to costly litigation. Additionally, the amendments could lead to forced outing of students, exposing them to potential harm. Lastly, the amendments establish rules that may impose broad censorship of LGBTQ+ identities in public schools, resulting in further marginalization of already vulnerable students and exacerbating school staffing shortages by pushing educators out of the profession.

Because of these concerns, I urge a “no” vote on House Bill 8. Given the importance of this issue to the educators, parents, and students of Ohio this will be a scorecard vote for OEA.

Sincerely,

Scott DiMauro
President

CC: Members of the Ohio House of Representatives

