



---

# ROBERT WITTKE

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 62<sup>nd</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Assembly Committee on Family Law

November 8, 2023

412 East

---

Chair Rozar and Committee Members,

Thank you for holding a public hearing on Assembly Bill 510 (AB 510) relating rights reserved to a parent or guardian of a child.

In recent years, many parents have become more actively involved in the education of their children. Unfortunately, public school districts have not always respected parental rights.

“This bill prohibits the state from infringing on the fundamental right of parents to direct the upbringing, education, health care, and mental health of their children without demonstrating that the infringement is required by a compelling governmental interest of the highest order as applied to the child, is narrowly tailored, and is not otherwise served by a less restrictive means.” [LRB Analysis]

Assembly Bill 510 is really about transparency, for example:

- ✓ Parents have a right to receive notice of and a chance to opt out of certain educational topics.
- ✓ Parents have a right to be notified about surveys to students.
- ✓ Parents have a right to receive information regarding the academic proficiency and classroom behavior of their children.
- ✓ Parents have a right to review all medical records related to their children and to be notified of health care services offered at the school.
- ✓ Parents have a right to review educational materials and access learning materials.
- ✓ Parents have a right to visit their child at school.
- ✓ Parents have a right to be notified about student safety and incidents of violence.
- ✓ Parents have a right to know about disciplinary action taken against their children.

Parents should be equal partners in the education of their children, and this bill would encourage such a partnership.

Thank you once again for holding a public hearing on Assembly Bill 510. I am happy to answer your questions.



# Van H. Wanggaard

Wisconsin State Senator

## Testimony on Assembly Bill 510

### **“Parent Bill of Rights”**

Good Morning. Thank you Chairwoman Rozar and committee members, for allowing me to testify on Assembly Bill 510 (AB 510) relating to rights reserved to a parent or guardian of child.

In short, this important legislation would establish a statutory and legal right for parents and guardians to make the best decisions for their individual child and their education.

Like generations before them, parents today have a deep, and very personal interest in how their children are raised, treated, and educated, whether that be at home, by society and/or in school; this is particularly true with respect “what” and “how” their children are educated.

Unfortunately, in recent years, parental interests have not always been acknowledged, let alone, respected by public school districts; in fact, I’ve been informed by parents in my District that their rights and beliefs are often disregarded and ignored with respect to the education, healthcare, and overall well-being of their children.

That is why this legislation, the “Parent Bill of Rights” bill is necessary at this time and why the bill is so critical for Wisconsin parents. As legislators, we have a duty to recognize and make clear, the rights of parents as well as to identify the consequences to school boards and school districts who choose not to respect these rights.

Some of the common sense rights that parents will have under this bill include:

#### **Educational Rights:**

1. The right to receive notice of and a chance to opt out of certain educational topics and surveys.
2. The right to determine the names and pronouns used for the child while at school.
3. The right to determine the religion of their child.
4. The right to receive information regarding the academic proficiency and classroom behavior of their children.

#### **Healthcare Rights:**

1. The right to make decisions regarding the vaccination of their children, including being notified of health care services offered at the school and have an opportunity to withhold consent or decline any specific service.

**Serving Racine and Kenosha Counties - Senate District 21**

2. The right to review all medical records related to their children.

**Access to Information Rights:**

1. The right to review educational materials and access learning materials.
2. The right to visit their child at school.

**Notification Rights:**

1. The right to be notified about student safety and incidents of violence, as well as updates to the school security or surveillance system.
2. The right to know about disciplinary action taken against their children.

Parents and schools should be partners in the education of their children and AB 510 would help ensure that partnership is successful. By supporting the Parent Bill of Rights, you will join a coalition of parent and children advocates-alike that our dedicated to strengthening the rights of parents as well as the healthy development of our children.

Thank you for your consideration of AB 510 and the Parent Bill of Rights.



**WISCONSIN COUNCIL  
OF CHURCHES**  
COURAGE. JUSTICE. HOLY IMAGINATION.

To: Members of the Assembly Committee on Family Law  
From: Rev. Breanna Illéné, Director of Ecumenical Innovation and Justice Initiatives, Wisconsin Council of Churches  
Date: November 8, 2023  
Re: Testimony in Opposition to Assembly Bill 510

The Wisconsin Council of Churches (WCC) is a network of Christian churches and faith-based organizations working together for the collective good. We connect 21 Christian traditions, comprising approximately 2,000 congregations and over one million church members. Through holy imagination, we support each other in making bold and courageous decisions that build community and foster peacemaking, social and economic justice for Wisconsin's most vulnerable residents, the vitality of the church, and the well-being of our neighbors.

As a Council, we have adopted a statement on nonviolence that reminds us that "Faithfulness to its mission requires the Church to speak out against violence, minister to its victims, and work tirelessly to reduce the level of violence in society." We believe that society should promote diversity, inclusion, and dignity. We denounce the violence in AB 510, which exacerbates division and fuels hate.

This legislation proposal claims to be about parental rights, but is more truthfully about disrupting the processes, protocols, and programs of both private and public schools. It grants parents the power to interfere in the day-to-day affairs of education, dictating what educators are allowed to teach. However, there are already established protocols and processes at the administrative, classroom, and school board levels for parents to voice their concerns and provide input into their children's education.

We assert that this bill was created with the intention of censorship and has no connection with meaningful, constructive parental involvement or engagement toward improving community life. During the 2021-2022 school year, Pen America conducted a study<sup>1</sup> that found that more than 1,600 books covering topics like LGBTQ issues, sexual education, activism and social justice, race, and novels featuring people of color as primary and secondary characters, were considered for removal in several states, especially Florida and Texas. We are talking here about redefining students' own family and community histories as controversial, and therefore as opt-out topics for their peers. This is destructive to community life. It has already been shown to be so; it will be so if it happens in Wisconsin.

(Page 1 of 2)

<sup>1</sup>*Banned in the USA: The Growing Movement to Censor Books in Schools*, <https://pen.org/report/banned-usa-growing-movement-to-censor-books-in-schools/>

AB-510 is an extension of this misguided crusade of ignorance. Freedom of speech is best exercised when people can read and understand literature of various genres, which gives voice to the complexity that this country is supposed to represent. Education serves the purpose of teaching children about their place in the world and their relationship with others. It aims not just to expand our intellectual capacity but also to broaden our hearts and minds, forging connections with a diverse range of ideas and people and ultimately building a better society and community.

Furthermore, our hardworking and dedicated educators, who tirelessly serve as role models, teachers, and coaches to our children during their crucial years of development, do not require additional bureaucracy; red tape that might hinder their ability to perform their jobs to the best of their potential. Many of our member traditions have a strong legacy of support for education and educators. We should continue promote a strong learning culture rather than disrupting it with unwarranted interference.

We acknowledge that parents hold the ultimate responsibility for their children's well-being. However, we must also recognize that children are still growing as individuals and learning what it means to respect one another in community. It is essential to allow children and youth appropriate measures of freedom to aid in growth. By restricting their freedom of expression, we limit their potential to become exemplary human beings. Why would we want to micromanage their development in ways that limit their ability to form and sustain healthy, diverse communities? Ultimately, what or whose purpose does that serve?

As Christians, we believe that God is inviting us to work towards the well-being of the world and its inhabitants. We are called to create communities that promote well-being and to advocate for public policies that do not cause harm. Therefore, in the spirit of love and accountability, we firmly oppose AB 510 based on its faults, and we urge this body to do the same.

Thank you for your time.

*(Page 2 of 2)*

TO: Members of the Assembly Committee on Family Law

FROM: Rev. Tim Schaefer  
Pastor, First Baptist Church of Madison

RE: Assembly Bill 510

Chair Rozar and members of the committee:

I have served as a pastor for eight years, five of those years as a minister to youth and their families. In that time, I have had the privilege of acting as educator, confidant, and spiritual guide to many teenagers and pre-teens. My experience in working with middle and high school students has taught me that in order to thrive, children and youth need a safe and inclusive environment in which to learn and a trusted teacher to facilitate their learning.

AB510 prevents teachers from providing a safe and inclusive learning environment and forces them to violate the trust of some of their students. Bills such as this one are political stunts that censor educators. Instead of supporting teachers, students, and parents, this bill pits them against one another. In particular, AB510 censors conversations about LGBTQ+ people in schools, which will have a chilling effect on free speech and will ultimately cause harm to children who will no longer have a safe and inclusive learning environment in which to express the fullness of their identities.

Please trust teachers—experts trained in education and childhood development—to do their jobs and focus instead on solving the real issues facing Wisconsin schools, such as inadequate public school funding and teacher shortages.

I urge you to vote NO on AB510.

Rev. Tim Schaefer  
Pastor, First Baptist Church of Madison

To the Members of the Committee on Family Law:

My name is Tessa Jade Price, and I am a transgender woman and community advocate at Trans Advocacy Madison. I urge you to vote NO on Assembly Bill 510. Restricting use of a child's preferred name and pronouns is dangerous and cruel and puts their lives at great risk. Censoring diversity topics or the fact that BIPOC or queer people exist is a fascist act, and I believe it's a sign the GOP has a fascist wing.

Magnus Hirschfeld was a Jewish Germany physician and sexologist who, in 1919, established a research institute in Berlin to support gay and trans folks because he noticed their absurdly high suicide rates. In 1933, the institute and its books were burned by the Nazi Party SA as it ramped up its purge on queers for being so-called degenerates.

The legacy of book burning lives on in this bill. The legacy of fascism and genocide haunt this bill. This bill is a purge on the history of minorities in the United States. You politicians are abusing your power to hurt all educators and students by interfering in their mission with your exclusion and ancient ideology. White supremacy is written all over this bill. A purge of queer people from public spaces is part of this bill.

You are creating problems where there are none. You are shadowboxing new generations because you know one day your power will fade. This generational warfare and purposeful targetting of children reeks of genocide. You want Queer folks like myself dead.

You believe a pile of dead Queers, dead minorities will win you elections. This bill draws on US history to erase Black Indigenous People of Color. It seeks to erase the US government's legacy of chattel slavery. It would hide the genocide of Indigenous people by the colonizers of the Americas. It could crumble all reference to the AIDS crisis or the long history of Civil Rights Movements.

What you are demanding with this bill is government lies taught in schools as truth. You are demanding a twisted funhouse mirror of history where you are always right. You cannot erase us. We will not let you erase us.

Tessa Jade Price





**Wisconsin Family Action**

PO Box 7486 • Madison WI 53707-7486  
608-268-5074 (Madison) • 866-849-2536 (toll-free) • 608-256-3370 (fax)  
info@wifamilyaction.org • www.wifamilyaction.org

---

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF ASSEMBLY BILL 510  
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON FAMILY LAW  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2023  
JACK HOOGENDYK, LEGISLATIVE & POLICY DIRECTOR**

Thank you, Chair Rozar and committee members, for the opportunity to testify on Assembly Bill 510. I am Jack Hoogendyk, Legislative and Policy Director for Wisconsin Family Action and we support Assembly Bill 510.

Madame Chair, the fundamental importance of family goes back thousands of years. It is the foundation of a civil society. Former U.S. Secretary of Education, William Bennett wrote ten years ago, “The family is the nucleus of civilization and the basic social unit of society. Research clearly shows that the institution of the family is the first form of community and government and, as Michael Novak said, ‘the first, best and original Department of Health, Education and Welfare.’”<sup>1</sup>

The American Psychological Association says, “Parents and caregivers are the most important people in a child's life. They offer love, acceptance, appreciation, encouragement, and guidance, and provide the most intimate context for the nurturing and protection of children as they develop their personalities and identities and also as they mature physically, cognitively, emotionally, and socially.”<sup>2</sup>

For almost 100 years, the U.S. Supreme Court has recognized the traditional role of parents in directing the care, custody, and control of their minor children. In *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, the Court declared that parental rights have been “established beyond debate as an enduring American tradition.” 406 US 205, 232 (1972)

We assert that parents absolutely have every right enumerated in this bill—and even more importantly, as this bill appropriately states: “A parent of a child in this state has inalienable rights that are more comprehensive than those listed in this section, unless such rights have been legally waived or terminated” (p. 7, lines 5-8).

“Inalienable rights” are defined legally as rights that “are not transferable or capable of being taken away or nullified.” Our Declaration of Independence speaks of “inalienable rights” and acknowledges the source for those rights - our Creator God. Therefore, government cannot revoke or transfer them.

Some might ask why this legislation is needed. Well, today, sadly, maybe even tragically, we need to specifically codify certain rights parents have. Assembly Bill 510 does that with the 16 delineations it contains. Why these 16? Because we have seen multiple times and places where the state and/or its agents have abused their power and encroached on these rights of parents when it comes to their children. You can go down the list on pages 4, 5 and 6, and most of us can immediately recall recent incidents where egregious wrongs were done to parents and their children in each cited right—whether regarding a child’s education, medical care, or mental health.

There are plenty of stories of how schools, for instance, have withheld critically important information from parents about what is happening with their child at school or some instances, have lied to parents.

---

<sup>1</sup> [Stronger Families, Stronger Societies - NYTimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/02/us/politics/stronger-families-stronger-societies.html)

<sup>2</sup> [Parents and caregivers are essential to children’s healthy development \(apa.org\)](https://www.apa.org/parenting/essential-to-childrens-development)

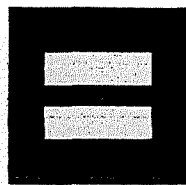


Children are not wards of the state or any of its agents. But too often, the state and its agents are acting as if they have territorial, legal rights that trump those of parents. This bill is designed to make sure these entities and agents, as well as the courts, are very clear about where the right to decide for and know about children rests—and it is with parents.

I am sure lawyers can cite numerous court decisions and pertinent case law that show specific rights of parents being recognized and protected. Some of these rights are included elsewhere in state and federal law. In light of this, some might argue this bill is unnecessary. We disagree. Putting these rights together in this specific place and way and spelling out these certain rights to make it abundantly clear about the limitations of the state and any of its agents is necessary for all the reasons mentioned above.

Furthermore, clarifying the legal standard by which to assess whether parents' rights have been abrogated and creating a cause of action for parents is imperative. This is prudential law. No parent should be left defenseless when government tries to strip them of their right to decide what is best for their child. This parental rights bill creates a balancing test that directs judges to take seriously in court every parent's right to determine what is best for their child.

We urge this committee to support AB 510 and move it to the full Assembly expediently.



**HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
CAMPAIGN®**

Wisconsin State Legislature  
Assembly Committee on Family Law,  
Room 412 E  
Madison WI 53708

November 8, 2023

**Re: HRC Opposition to WI A.B. 510**

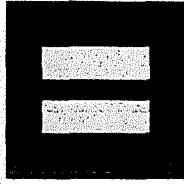
Dear Chairwoman Rozar and Members of the Committee:

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) is America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) equality. By inspiring and engaging all Americans, HRC strives to end discrimination against LGBTQ+ citizens and realize a nation that achieves fundamental fairness and equality for all. On behalf of HRC's more than three million members and supporters, many of whom live in Wisconsin, we are deeply troubled by A.B. 510 and the harm its passage would incur on our students.

Schools have an obligation to provide safe and affirming learning environments for all students, regardless of their background. This legislation attempts to release Wisconsin schools from that sacred responsibility by singling out race, sexual orientation, and gender identity in school curricula, contributing to the stigmatization and isolation that youth of color and LGBTQ+ youth face far too often in their communities.

A.B. 510 asserts that "controversial subjects" require parental notice, and include a plethora of real-world topics, including information about sexual orientation, gender identity, racial identity, and racism. Furthermore, the bill allows parents to opt their children out of any class solely based on their religious or personal convictions. These egregious provisions make it clear that proponents of this legislation have no interest in preparing students for the real world or in encouraging critical thinking.

The histories of marginalized groups have been minimized in our nation's classrooms for centuries. Today, textbooks and lesson plans conspicuously leave out of the contributions and successes of members of the LGBTQ+ community and people of color, offering students an education that is lacking in both accuracy and diversity. The exclusion comes at the expense of some of our most vulnerable children and fosters a climate of anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination and racial prejudice in a place where children should feel safe.



HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
CAMPAIGN®

Additionally, A.B. 510 would force school staff to deadname and misgender students all under the guise of so-called “parental rights”. To be very clear, a person’s identity is their own to manage without interference and for too many LGBTQ+ youth, can be a matter of life and death. It should come as no surprise that LGBTQ+ youth are more likely to face bullying, violence, suicidality, and harassment simply because of who they are. Notably, LGBTQ+ youth are around twice as likely as their non-LGBTQ+ peers to say they have been excluded because they were different.<sup>1</sup> When asked to describe the most important problem affecting their lives, nearly a quarter of LGBTQ+ youth named school and bullying problems, second only to non-accepting families.<sup>2</sup> A recent study indicates that the majority of LGBTQ+ youth continue to experience negative, and at times hostile, school environments. An affirming and supportive school environment is absolutely necessary to ensure that LGBTQ+ students feel safe and accepted in the classroom.

As written, this malicious legislation does little more than jeopardize the lives and dignity of vulnerable children, and sets Wisconsin students up for personal, professional, and academic failure. We appreciate the opportunity to submit this testimony in opposition to this discriminatory legislation and hope that it will be swiftly rejected.

Sincerely,

Courtney C. Avant  
Legislative Counsel  
Human Rights Campaign  
Washington, DC

---

<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Campaign, *Growing Up LGBT in America*, HRC Youth Survey Report Key Findings, 16 [https://assets2.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/Growing-Up-LGBT-in-America\\_Report.pdf](https://assets2.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/Growing-Up-LGBT-in-America_Report.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* at 2.

guy john halcón, M.S.  
Regarding AB 510  
November 8th, 2023

My name is guy, my pronouns are he/him/él, and I am a concerned resident of Dane County testifying today in opposition of Wisconsin Assembly Bill 510. I moved to Madison over three years ago for school; along with studying law, I earned a Master's degree, and I am now a PhD student. My Doctoral studies, same as my Master's, are with the Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis Department at our School of Education just down the street. I've had the chance to help with the representation of disabled students, I've worked for public schools in three different states including Wisconsin, I spent a summer as a fellow for the Universities of Wisconsin, and I currently am helping teach undergrad students. I am here today separate but very informed by my work and studies.

Because there is so much in Assembly Bill 510 that can be critiqued, from poor writing to manipulative rhetoric tactics, and because I have a limited amount of time to speak, this testimony does not touch on all of the concerns I have with this bill but I will provide words that would be required to be reported to parents under AB 510 as including "controversial subjects".

Our Youth Scholars are not objects or items to be owned, they have their own rights. Our Youth Scholars have free will, they have the ability to think for themselves. Our public schools have certain responsibilities to all children, and there are anti-discrimination laws that have been created in response to an acknowledgement that marginalized communities have in the past and continue to this day to face systemic harm and barriers. Educators are ideally trained to provide academic and interpersonal support to our Youth Scholars. And ideally, education helps children build their ability to communicate with others and problem solve - key skills in navigating our capitalistic society. Teaching students about a diverse range of topics and experiences can help students succeed in the workforce and build deeper connections with others. Beyond that, students from communities that have been minoritized get the opportunity to see themselves and their communities acknowledged and celebrated when the curriculum pushes beyond the still White, straight, cis-centric curriculum. I also want to acknowledge a hard truth that there are times where education has saved students from harm; there have been anecdotes of children discovering and reporting they were being abused once provided sex education, a curriculum this bill would likely require to be reported to parents prior to and considered as optional.

All students benefit from a diverse and inclusive curriculum; this attempt to bully-out curriculum under the guise of "parental rights" is a manipulative tactic that directly reflects how certain folks in

power in this country have continued to look down on their primary voting base for their own gain. To all the White and straight and cis parents in Wisconsin listening in to this, marginalized people are not your enemy. Learning about us and our communities does not take away or harm your children. I'm willing to bet that many of us care deeply about the well-being of your children, likely because of the barriers we've had to tackle while navigating education and other systems. It's seeing, learning more about, and experiencing barriers that has pushed me in my studies to continue on advocating for better public education. And I can say that as a disabled, transgender Latino educator, I want every single Youth Scholar in this state to receive the support they need to meet whatever goals they have and I'd like to see our educators better supported.

As a trans\* man who has worked with trans\* Youth Scholars, I am especially concerned by the inclusion of anti-trans goals within AB 510. Schools need to be safe and supportive for trans\* children, we have legal and moral obligations to our trans\* Youth Scholars. This bill could lead to a violation of the rights of these students, could break their trust, and could severely impede their ability to learn. We're not trying to "trans" your children, we are working to make sure they receive the support they need to safely navigate their learning experiences no matter their gender. I have good reason to believe that AB 510 could have severe consequences for trans\* Youth Scholars, and I want the folks who vote yes for this harmful bill to understand that you could have blood on your hands.

On the note of harm and for my final note: there's a section of the poem "Pensamiento Serpentino" by Luis Valdez which was inspired by Mayan philosophy that has been listed as banned curriculum in some states and would technically be considered as something that would have to be reported to parents under AB 510:

"In Lak'ech / Tú eres mi otro yo. / You are my other me. / Si te hago daño a ti, / If I do harm to you, / Me hago daño a mi mismo. / I do harm to myself. / Si te amo y respeto, / If I love and respect you, / Me amo y respeto yo. / I love and respect myself."

I urge folks to not play into the scare tactics of AB 510; this concept of ownership over children is immensely harmful. It is harmful to attack public schools simply because they're trying to educate youth and prepare them for their futures. Providing resources and support and a sense of community in schools is a loving action, one that shows a respect for our collective and separate futures.

Please vote no on Assembly Bill 510.

11/5/23

Dear State Assembly Members;

As parents of five children and grandparents to 15, we wholeheartedly support Assembly Bill 510/Senate Bill 489, also known as the Parents Rights Bill. As the primary educators of their children, this proposed law, the parental rights should never be politically charged.

Parents inherently should have the legal right to raise their children in their preferred religion and attend the type of school that is in the best interests of their child. A school should never infringe on the family's decision regarding health care services such as vaccinations, abortions, contraceptives, gender transition, medications, or the child's pronouns.

Schools are not parents and by the very nature of parenthood, the parents know best in raising their child and schools should never interfere. Schools should have to let parents know if they are participating in surveys and of what type. Nor should schools be pushing any racial, sexual, or radical gender ideology, or other age-inappropriate content. Let the parents be the judge as to what their child is exposed to and when.

It is unfathomable that parents need a bill such as this to protect their children when for centuries it was common sense that education and the type of education received would automatically fall to parental responsibility. For too long, parents have had to take a backseat to propaganda aimed towards their most precious resource, their children. It is time to put responsibility for the children in the school system back in the hands of those who know best—the parents.

Most parents are good and decent, and schools should never automatically assume they know better than the parents in any area of life. The children do not belong to the schools and the parents are placing trust in the educators to give them a solid and basic education, not a political venue. We agree with every section, graph, and subsection of this Bill and we urge you to pass it immediately for the sake of our precious children, grandchildren and their families.

Sincerely,

Blaise & Karen Mahoney  
7729 23<sup>rd</sup> Ave  
Kenosha, WI. 53143



Alexandra Schweitzer  
W356N6665 East Stonewood Drive  
Oconomowoc, Wi 53066  
414-617-3720

November 8, 2023

Dear Chairman Roar and Committee Members,

Thank you for holding the hearing today on Parental Rights, Assembly Bill 510. I regret that I cannot be there in person to testify on the importance of this issue.

My name is Alexandra Schweitzer, I am President of the Republican Women of Waukesha County, I am also a founding member of Parents on Patrol, a board member of the up and coming Conservative Women's Action PAC and a fierce defender of our students right to an education and a true believer that the parent is the primary educator of the child. It is a true honor to write this letter and celebrate our Country with you. Thank you again for holding today's hearing.

On May 13, 2022 I personally saw the consequences of government over-reach and learned the consequences of asking questions of my local school board and questioning the educational materials used in our classrooms. *I was served a Cease and Desist*; I was told that I should *cease and desist* from asking for parental rights, I was told that I should *cease and desist* asking for all students to receive an education, not an indoctrination. I should just keep my mouth shut and leave education, and the curriculum our children are exposed to, to the professionals in charge of such decisions.

It is with a debt of gratitude to the Wisconsin Institute of Law and Liberty that the out of control school board was reminded that as an American citizen I have the legal right to voice my concerns. That the Oconomowoc Area School District School Board was out of reach and I was in fact allowed my rights as a parent and an American.

In February 2022 I was invited to testify in front of the Senate Committee hearing on behalf of parental rights. I spoke about age-inappropriate materials, like *The 57 Bus*, that were available to our students, I asked why teachers, administrator and elected officials felt that they had the right to sexually educate our children with little or no consent. I asked why our elected officials, who are employed by We, the Parent to represent us, the administration and staff felt it was incumbent on them to have controversial conversations with our children without consent.

During this time, I contacted the local school Board President and school leadership with my concerns. I directly quote his answer to my question:

***" [T]he discussion we had months ago was to review the selection of library materials standards and how we can refine that to our community, not academia's standards. We commit to using transparency and communication to help our parents know what is in their kids backpacks. I believe this because there is no single standard for appropriateness, and I believe in the 1st amendment."***

I was left bewildered by this statement as distribution of pornographic materials to children and the sexual education of students without parental consent is in fact **not** protected by the First Amendment.

In the May 13, 2022 Cease and Desist letter I was told that my direct quote of Mr. Wood was defamatory. In the response that was given my attorney's pointed out that my statement was referring to a text and email exchange between Mr. Wood and I, where the books that parents had contacted me about relaying their concerns was not defamatory.

I was also told that transparency is "alive and well" in the Oconomowoc School District, when I questioned further, I was ignored.

I also questioned the Board President about the board's public statement pertaining to the age-inappropriate materials accessible on student Chromebooks; I reminded him that as recently as August 2021 the school board publicly stated:

*I quote Mr. Wood directly, improper grammar and all:*

***After reviewing the digital library subscription the district has decided to discontinue the.... SORA. The decision was made due to the lack of ability to personalize to align with our OASD selection process and age guidelines. We're in the process of reviewing those procedures to include parent permissions for access to the young adult collections. If you wanted to come up here and read port[sic] to us, please don't. We've already took action on that we get it, it's important that parents are aware of what's getting in front of their kids. We're working as a district to put that front and center. Thank you for bringing to our attention and just know we are listening.***

I was hopeful that the issue had been resolved and no further action was required, and with that intent I open records requested a comprehensive book list from the district in September 2021. I was given an incomplete list; I received library books, but it did not include any books accessible through the Chromebooks, online library, including the much discussed SORA App or textbooks used by teachers.

Instead of addressing the important topic of age-inappropriate materials accessible to students, the district's lawyers accused me of "misinformation." I have yet to receive a response from any member of the school board to my numerous questions. I filed an open records request as to what is available to the students, I have yet to hear back. It has astounded me time and again that instead of doing the right thing and denying children access to these books a cease and desist was ordered and the books were never really addressed.

I have openly wondered why it is acceptable for elected officials to take our hard earned tax dollars and weaponize them against We, the People. I was within my legal right to question these books and demand accountability. These are our children and the government over-reach of trying to co-parent, if not completely strip the parental rights from the parents must come to an end.

I write to you today in support of Assembly Bill 510, and ask you, our public representatives to support it as well.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alexandra Schweitzer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

## **Upholding parents rights when it comes to their children and their education**

Dear Legislators, I support AB 510, which allows parents to have the major say in their children's education. We pay the taxes to the school systems to honor our rights to educate our children, so they can learn to become proficient in basic content areas. Teachers do have knowledge in those areas and we, parents, entrust our children to them to be taught those subjects free of political bias. We want our kids to be able to have top notch academic skills as well as social skills. The goal of school should teach reading, writing, math, and science, respectively. The broad-based morals and values of respect and empathy of everyone, no matter gender, religion, nationality, or disability can happen and should. That DOES NOT mean a school district or teacher can decide to usurp the rights and morals of parents, who want to protect our kids from gender ideology fads and "sketchy" science. Lately, things have been deemed scientific because it earns gross profits, not because it's true, healthy science being instituted. We, the parents, have earned that right by choosing to become parents. If parents want to teach their kids about trending social and gender ideologies, they also should have that right within their own homes. These are OUR kids! We DO NOT co-parent with the government! Schools should NEVER hide anything from parents when it applies to their children. Parents are lawfully responsible for their minor children. We became the United States of America to escape not only tyranny but also authoritarian government structures that wanted to control religious freedoms and speech.

Sincerely,

Denise and Matt Seyfer, parents of three boys who attended both private and public schools

Denise M. Seyfer



November 8, 2023

Assembly Committee on Family Law  
Representative Rozar, Chair  
State Capitol, Room 13 W  
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Rep. Rozar and members of the committee:

Survival Coalition of disability organizations appreciates the opportunity to testify on AB 510. We believe this bill will disproportionately impact students with disabilities.

- **Parent determination of type of school or education setting the child attends (48.9865 (1)(3)(b).** In the case of students with disabilities, under federal law (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 20 U.S.C. Sec. 1400et. seq.) the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team make the decision on schools and setting within a district. Under both federal and state law, the parent has a right to be included in the decision, but they do not always have the final decision. This provision of AB 510 creates the real possibility that state and federal law could be seen as in direct conflict.
- **Controversial subjects. (48.9865 (1)(3)(i)** Bias against people with disabilities has resulted in a persistent belief that certain subjects—like sex education, gender identity, and sexual orientation—are not warranted because of erroneous assumptions that people with disabilities will not have certain experiences. For example, a lack of sex education results in people with disabilities not having a sense of whether behavior (their own or someone else's) is appropriate or a form of abuse. We are concerned the phrase "content that is not age appropriate, as defined in s. 118.019 (1m) (a)." included in the definition of controversial subjects will result in exclusion of students with disabilities from academic topics based on their disability status. Infantilization and low expectations of people with disabilities is a persistent bias, and the outdated practice of assessing intelligence based on IQ scores contribute to incorrect assessments of student's ability to learn and understand developmentally appropriate content. All students can learn given the appropriate support, and all students to learn students must participate in curriculum that supports high expectations.
- **Opt out. (48.9865 (1)(3)(j)** We work with many parents or guardians who believe in their student's potential. That is not true for all parents or guardians. Parents or guardians are subjected towards negative attitudes and bias against disability. Those attitudes may influence or prompt parents to opt out of core educational content because of a belief that a person with a disability does not need to know or learn because they have a disability. For example, this provision could be used to exclude students from learning math or reading because a parent does not believe their student's disability makes that learning possible. This is out of step with federal education law and best practice and is discriminatory to the student.
- **Disciplinary Action. (48.9865 (1)(3)(n)** The bill includes "the right to be informed of any disciplinary action" but then lists seclusion and restraint along with suspension, expulsion, and removal from class. Schools already must inform parents of seclusion and restraint per 2019 Act

118, but these are emergency safety measures NOT disciplinary actions and should never be listed as the latter. Survival Coalition agrees that parental notification when a student is removed from the classroom is important for students with disabilities, as this does happen often and parents are not aware.

- **Informed of violence and crime (48.9865 (1)(3)(o))** The definition of “violence” is vague and could result in the disclosure of disability related behaviors to the entire school community. It is unclear what constitutes a “crime” under the bill, and whether that means an arrest or conviction or a different threshold.

DPI has issued guidance ([Special Education Bulletin 10-01.pdf \(wi.gov\)](#)) to outline special education law requirements for parental consent when parents who share legal custody do not agree. Parents may have differences of opinion on education issues. Divorced parents may have “legal custody,” “joint legal custody” or the court may designate one parent as the “education authority.” The bulletin explains:

*“Legal custody” means the right and responsibility to make major decisions for the child, including educational decisions. “Joint legal custody” means the parents share decision-making authority. If a court orders joint legal custody and makes no other specific provision related to educational decisions, the parents share that decision-making authority. However, a court may order joint legal custody and give one parent sole power to make specified decisions such as educational decisions. Because court orders can vary considerably, it is important to determine the specific provisions.*

AB 510 references “parent or guardian” but is silent on whose rights must be followed when two parents with equal decision-making authority do not agree. Under circumstances where parents are divorced, it is possible one parent has sole authority to make educational decisions because they have been given “legal custody” or been designated the child’s “educational authority” by the court. The bill does not include these terms.

In the bill, the remedy for violations is for parents to bring a civil action against the district. In several areas itemized as parental rights, this would go around existing due process for families some of which is authorized under federal law.

We are unclear if the provisions in this bill apply only to public schools, or if the legislature’s intent is to extend all parents of students attending public or choice schools have these rights and remedies. The bill refers to “schools,” however the provision about legal remedy authorizes a parent/guardian to bring a civil action against a “governmental body or official,” which does not appear to include private schools or independent charter schools.

Survival Co-Chairs:

Beth Swedeen, [beth.swedeen@wisconsin.gov](mailto:beth.swedeen@wisconsin.gov); (608) 220-2924;  
Kristin M. Kerschensteiner, [kitk@drwi.org](mailto:kitk@drwi.org); (608) 267-0214;  
Patti Becker, [beckerp@clanet.org](mailto:beckerp@clanet.org); (608) 242-8335

Please oppose Bill AB-510. As a Christian, I find it abhorrent to manipulate the history and cultures that children may be exposed to, simply to satisfy the preferences of those who find such distasteful. It is our duty, as public educators and Christians to tell the truth, so that all are represented fairly. With this, comes the only path to a loving, equitable society. I call on you to resist pressure from fear-based exclusion. It does not bode well for our society.

Susan Donahoe  
Member, Christians for Truth  
Madison WI 53716



To the Assembly Committee on Family Law,

I am B Gowan, a 17 year old student in Cambridge, WI. I am writing to urge you that we cannot allow AB 510 to pass. Students deserve the right to make their own decisions. They deserve access to unbiased, accurate, and complete information. If important topics are restricted, the next generation of our society will grow up being fed propaganda as fact. A bill like this can and will be taken advantage of to suit political agendas. We need complete information in schools, without bias, influence, or prejudice. Freedom means freedom to draw our own conclusions, and teaching means teaching truths, not baseless ideas presented as facts. **DO NOT LET THIS BILL PASS.**

- B Gowan

Cambridge 53523

Dear members of the assembly committee,

My name is Jessica Henning of Muskego Wisconsin. I want to address my concerns about the proposed legislation in AB510. The language in this bill targets marginalized groups under proposed verbiage that they are controversial issues not to be discussed in school.

Human beings are not controversial subject matter. The marginalization and dehumanization though excluding the mere mention of their existence in public education is appalling. I've seen several books banned within my district that detail the history of our world and our country and the plight of people in minority groups and bills like this aid in efforts to further silence minorities and create further inequality. When I see our history stripped of the difficulties and true failures I see the possibilities of our young minds who do not learn about these issues doomed to repeat our past mistakes. I would implore the committee to think critically about how we should allow our children access to our history so that they may learn from it and grow to be better than those of the past. To learn these crucial lessons helps foster understanding and push us to new heights.

As a parent of two children currently in their early years of schooling, I want to ensure their access to curriculum that fosters growth, understanding of our past, and progress towards a brighter future where all people are truly created equal. We should be giving the access to the information to continue to grow. The greater wealth of information our children can be exposed to will help them become greater critical thinkers and challenge inequalities while standing up for everyone. I want my kids to have that, to know what it is to stand up for everyone and make sure everyone is heard.

Finally as I see the erasure of the realities of minority groups from our education system I see the further degradation of safety of the people in these groups. Acknowledging the existence of these minority groups helps erase hate and division. Exposing children to all people is important to understanding the world they live in and how to treat all people with respect and empathy. This element is such a cornerstone for the development of our society. I ask once more that you turn down this bill and stand up for children's rights to learn and grow.

Sincerely,  
Jessica Henning

Muskego, WI

To the Assembly Committee on Family Law,

I am submitting testimony against AB 510. This is a bill that seeks to restrict educational freedom and censor “controversial” topics in Wisconsin classrooms. In reality it is a hate filled wish list for those that seek to punish freedom and diversity in America. Do we really need to punish a child for wanting to pick a nickname in school? At what point has helicopter parenting passed the point of satire?

This legislation would have a chilling effect on free speech and interfere with a teacher’s ability to do their job. It would also allow parents to decide what name and pronouns their children are allowed to use in school, as well as challenge a teacher’s lesson plans for any reason. These types of policies have already been used across the United States by Republican funded groups and operatives to punish any and every grievance with diversity and minority representation in education, government, and society at large.

Curriculum should be set by teachers and educational experts, not elected officials with political motives and crazed citizens held captive by propaganda and fear mongering. At its core, AB 510 is an extreme political stunt that pits students, teachers, and parents against each other. This bill appears to be targeted against certain kids, but the truth is that it hurts ALL kids. It's on all of us to resist this egregious attack on educational freedom.

Bob  
Wisconsin

To the Assembly Committee on Family Law,

My name is Matthew McKellips. I am a social work student in Madison. I am in opposition to this bill because I am concerned about the impact it will have on Wisconsin teachers and schools. Lesson plans are supposed to be made by teachers, not lawmakers.

This bill would infringe on family privacy and insert the government further into private lives. Partisan politics should not determine the content of our schools or family life. This bill would censor teachers and pit students, parents, and school administrators against each other. In the increasingly dire mental health crisis in our schools, the last thing we need is government overreach into the private workings of families.

I urge you to reconsider this bill and to vote against it when the time comes.

Thank you for your time.

Matthew McKellips

Hello,

My name is Karin Davidson. I am a parent of an 8th grader and a 5th grader in Oregon School District. I used to be a full-time teacher in Los Angeles, and am now a substitute teacher in the district where my children attend school.

We all want kids in our communities to receive good educations that nurture their curiosity and give them knowledge that will aid them in living independent, full lives. While I understand that bill AB-510 comes in part from concern for children's education, I think it will hurt school districts, including students and the educators who work there, by squashing dialogue in our schools and communities and sowing mistrust between educators and parents.

There is already a widespread teacher shortage. In our current divisive political climate, it has become more common for school boards/school districts and community members to butt heads. The impact of Covid on educators and students is still reverberating throughout communities. If this legislation is passed, there are negative impacts this will have. First, it will nurture a culture of distrust between teachers and parents/guardians. It will further lower the morale of educators. This is the opposite of what we all want for our communities. Second, it will limit potentially rich dialogues regarding important topics about our history and how we have arrived at where we are today, and what are ways we can continue to make things better going forward. Third, it will continue to sow fear in our communities regarding certain topics that are the target of this bill by encouraging schools and communities to avoid topics such as race and sexuality because they are hard to talk about, and we are still learning about them. They are indeed hard to talk about, but in order to make things better, we have to talk about them.

In my children's school district, we are already informed by the schools about when discussions about sensitive topics, like learning about human reproduction, are planned to take place. We are sent weekly newsletters by my 5th grader's teachers that include highlights about what our children have been learning that week. We are invited to parent conferences twice a year to discuss our students' progress. The schools already keep us informed, and invite us to share our thoughts and questions if we have them. There is no need to pass laws to demand this of schools, which are already often overextended with trying to care for and educate our kids. This will put yet another hoop in place for school districts to jump through, and will create more difficulty for educators in the classroom.

Passing this bill will hurt the trust we hope to build in our schools and communities, and will hurt our children's learning. Please oppose Assembly Bill 510.

Sincerely,

Karin Davidson  
Oregon, WI 53575

To The Assembly Committee on Family Law,

I urge you in the strongest to strike down this bill that would silence free speech, impose onerous parental overreach on our teachers, and write child abuse into legislation.

It's vitally important that children be able to use the name and pronouns that match their identity. If it were made law that teachers and staff had to address children by the name and pronouns their parents pick for them, and those did not match the name and Pronouns the child uses, they lose the only affirming space available to them. It would be hugely damaging to their mental health. It would also cause them, in some cases, to be outed as trans to parents who might abuse them. It could lead to their abuse or murder.

Teachers cannot be expected to function if every lesson plan is subject to parental review. Our teachers are already overworked and underpaid in understaffed and underfunded conditions. It creates an untenable slippery slope for the integrity of our educational system and it overburdens our already overburdened teachers.

Curriculum should be determined by educational experts and teachers, not radically regressive politicians. AB 510 is a political stunt that pits parents, teachers, and students against each other.

Please vote no.

Karl Kerr  
Holmen, WI



My name is Quinn, and I am a resident of La Crosse. I've lived in Wisconsin for 30 years and I have 7 children. I am writing to urge you to vote NO on AB 510. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because it would have a negative effect on free speech and impair a teacher's ability to teach. I myself am transgender. If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin. Bills that censor education are political stunts that pit teachers, parents, and students against each other, and that hurts all of our kids. Instead, teachers and parents should be allies with each other and teachers should not be forced to violate the trust of their students. Sincerely,

Quinn McAnany,  
La Crosse, WI, 54603

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Family Law, Clerks and Staff:

My name is Zach Leavy, and I am a resident of Brooklyn. I've lived in Wisconsin for 17 years.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on AB 510. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills!!!

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

Bills that censor education are political stunts that pit teachers, parents, and students against each other, and that hurts all of our kids. Instead, teachers and parents should be allies with each other and teachers should not be forced to violate the trust of their students.

Sincerely,  
Zachary Leavy

Brooklyn WI 53521

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Family Law, Clerks and Staff:

My name is Kierstyn Baird, and I am a resident of La Crosse, Wisconsin.  
I am writing to urge you to vote NO on AB 510.

As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to this bill because, if passed, the repercussions of AB 510 will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

Bills that censor education are political stunts that pit teachers, parents, and students against each other, and that hurts all of our kids. Instead, teachers and parents should be allies with each other and teachers should not be forced to violate the trust of their students.

Sincerely,  
Kierstyn Baird

La Crosse, WI 54601

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Family Law, Clerks and Staff:

My name is Alesha Schandelmeier, and I am a resident of Onalaska. I've lived in Wisconsin for 19 years and have a transgender son.


I am writing to urge you to vote NO on AB 510. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because this is a dangerous precedent to set!

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

Bills that censor education are political stunts that pit teachers, parents, and students against each other, and that hurts all of our kids. Instead, teachers and parents should be allies with each other and teachers should not be forced to violate the trust of their students.

Sincerely,

Alesha Schandelmeier  
Onalaska, WI 54650

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alesha Schandelmeier", is written over a large, faint, circular watermark or stamp that is mostly illegible. The signature is located in the lower right quadrant of the page.

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Family Law, Clerks and Staff:

My name is Amber Boeder, and I am a resident of La Crosse. I've lived in Wisconsin for 4 years.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on AB 510. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because

I do not agree that teachers language should be impacted in the ways they educate about LGBTQIA+ topics. They should be able to teach truthfully using developmentally appropriate language and there is nothing inappropriate about LGBTQIA+ topics inherently just as there is nothing wrong with CIS/HET topics as long as they are addressed developmentally appropriately.

An individual knows themselves best, and should be able to identify as they see fit for themselves. To take that away from a child is invalidating. Children need safe places to identify and explore who they are even if that changes throughout their lives. They need the safety to explore and find themselves regardless of identity.

I stand with the LGBTQIA+!

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

Bills that censor education are political stunts that pit teachers, parents, and students against each other, and that hurts all of our kids. Instead, teachers and parents should be allies with each other and teachers should not be forced to violate the trust of their students.

Sincerely,

Amber Boeder

La Crosse, 54601

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Family Law, Clerks and Staff:

Hi, I'm Sagittarius Lefor and I'm a student at Superior High School who is concerned about the text in the Assembly bill 510. and one line got me concerned " The right to determine the names and pronouns used for the child while at school". Assuming that those who want to vote this bill into law are not trans let me paint you a picture for you. One that is my boyfriend who doesn't have the luxury of having a supportive family like myself. So he wakes up in a body he ABSOLUTELY despises and so much so that he has to take showers in the dark just so that the dysphoria *\*does not\** drain him. *\*Then\** he has to deal with his family where if he gets outed he WILL get kicked out so he stays hidden as *\*his\** true self. With him not being able to be open he gets drained even more from his family deadnaming and misgendering him CONSISTENTLY. Luckily he has supportive teachers who will do *\*everything\** in their power to make sure that he is able to learn *\*because\** how is someone supposed to *\*learn\** when the only thing he can FOCUS on is how their brain and body *\*does not\** line up. With the text in the bill that would FORCE teachers to deadname and misgender him. For those that don't understand how *\*difficult\** it is, I propose a Little thought experiment called "A brain in a jar". To start this off, think to yourselves how do I know that I am a man or a woman. Now that you are confident in your gender lets remove an arm and ask yourself the same question then your other arm and repeat that line of thinking, removing a body part in your head asking if i'm still a man or woman until you are just a brain in a jar and once you reach that final part ask yourself am I a man or woman. *\*Keep\** in mind this is about identity and not physical appearance. If you still identify with your sex then congrats and if not then you must be trans and not knowing it or are trans. But how does this tie in with not being able to learn? Well us trans people have gone through this thought experiment including myself but life isn't just "a brain in a jar" you have a body and stuff you like to do and wear so let's talk about me, Sagittarius. *\*I am\** an extremely masculine nonbinary person who is assigned male at birth. I'm in football and wrestling and being in sports, *\*mindset is everything\**, and I lose my *\*focus\** when I'm *\*misgendered\** or *\*deadnamed\** because then I start focusing on the fact that my brain and body are at odds *\*all the time\** but I do better when my coach, coach DeMeyer, calls be Sagittarius and use they/them pronouns for me because then my brain and body are not at odds and I *\*can\** focus on practice but when my teammates do the *\*opposite\** I lose that because then i'm REMINDED that my brain and body are different. THAT'S why I wholeheartedly oppose this bill. IT'S NOT for my sake but for *\*those\** that don't have safe and welcoming homes, FOR THOSE that have to hide their true self, FOR THOSE who endure harassment from not just the people at school but family.



To the Assembly Committee on Family Law,

As a parent with two children attending public school, I strongly oppose AB510.

This bill, if passed, would censor conversations about LGBTQ+ people in schools and threaten freedom of expression in Wisconsin, according to legal and policy experts. The intentionally vague and confusing language in this bill would have a chilling effect on free speech, distract school administrators from real issues and interfere with teachers' ability to do their jobs.

The role of our teachers is to provide a safe and inclusive learning environment, free from bullying and discrimination. **Bills that censor educators are political stunts that pit teachers, parents, and students against each other, which hurts all of our kids.** Instead, teachers and parents should be allies with each other and teachers should not be forced to violate the trust of their students. These bills appear to target certain kids but actually they hurt all kids. The people who are supposed to be setting the education policy to help children are not fulfilling that promise – all of our kids are facing a mental health crisis. All of our schools are having a teacher shortage and facing funding shortfalls. The people we elected should be taking the education of our kids seriously, not grandstanding with these political distractions.

Furthermore, this bill infringes on families' privacy by creating arbitrary requirements for 'all parents' to provide written confirmation for certain decisions, raising serious concerns about the rights of families with separated, divorced or single parents.

We need to leave lesson plans to teachers, who are the experts, not lawmakers with political agendas. Our lawmakers need to stop meddling in classrooms and focus on solving the real issues facing our school system – like teacher shortages and inadequate funding.

Sincerely,  
Randi Cartmill  
Madison, Wisconsin

Please vote against AB 510 it is a bad bill which undermines education and censures education and pit students, teachers and parents against each other and their voices should be heard.

Sincerely,

Russell J. Novkov

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Family Law, Clerks and Staff:

My name is Jo Jensen, and I am a resident of Madison for 43 years. I've lived in Wisconsin for the entire 65 years of my life. I am a parent, aunt and grand parent.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on AB 510. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to it because it is not factual- science based, and hateful.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

I think it is important to respect and protect our children. We do this by being honest, getting valid, up to date information about the things that concern them, and offering a safe place for their questions and concerns about negotiating their growing minds and bodies.

My experience as a middle school health teacher (22 years in MMSD) has taught me that students get their information from a plethora of sources, mostly on line, and of those, many are not reliable, that is, not science based.

As a health educator, I was thanked by parents , more often than not, for having discussions about sex and sexuality with their youth.

The notion that sexuality education is improper for early teens is misinformed. As we grow as humans we wonder what's happening to our bodies and minds.

Having science, facts, to back up what's going on normalizes a child's wonderings. For a child that does not fit the cis gender mold, it is of the utmost importance that they have allies to negotiate their journey to adulthood. To deny a human their right to be who they are, to be able to express themselves as the human they believe themselves to be is a crime against humanity. To be a teacher, one must love and respect the humans that comprise their classroom- no matter how challenging. Picking and choosing who succeeds is against the law and morally reprehensible. Love and protect all the kids.

Support humanity by supporting all children.

Love.

Jo Jensen  
Madison WI 53704

To all members of the assembly Committee on Family Law, Clerks and Staff:

I urge you in the strongest to strike down this bill that would silence free speech, impose onerous parental overreach on our teachers, and write child abuse into legislation.

It's vitally important that children be able to use the name and pronouns that match their identity. If it were made law that teachers and staff had to address children by the name and pronouns their parents pick for them, and those did not match the name and Pronouns the child uses, they lose the only affirming space available to them. It would be hugely damaging to their mental health. It would also cause them, in some cases, to be outed as trans to parents who might abuse them. It could lead to their abuse or murder.

Teachers cannot be expected to function if every lesson plan is subject to parental review. Our teachers are already overworked and underpaid in understaffed and underfunded conditions. It creates an untenable slippery slope for the integrity of our educational system, and it overburdens our already overburdened teachers.

Curriculum should be determined by educational experts and teachers, not radically regressive politicians. AB 510 is a political stunt that pits parents, teachers, and students against each other.

Please vote no.

Ashton Freyson  
Holmen, WI

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Family Law, Clerks and Staff:

My name is Jane Benzschawel, and I am a resident of La Crosse County. I've lived in Wisconsin for 41 years and I'm a parent of two small children.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on AB 510. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because policy should protect children. Policy should first center who is the most vulnerable in decision making and this bill would further isolate and marginalize children whose parents are unable and unwilling to accept their gender diverse children. Below are links to national resources that highlight research on runaway and homeless youth. Of note is the link between increased homelessness and family rejection. Further isolating gender diverse children in one of the safe places in their lives is prioritizing not parental rights but parental dominance through power and control.

<https://www.rhyttac.net/lgbtq-youth-and-young-adults-resources>

Please use your power to keep kids safe when home is not. If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

Jane Benzschawel

La Crosse, 54601

As a mother of a transgender child and an advocate for all LGBTQ+ children, this bill must not be passed. This is dangerous and puts the lives of our youth at risk.

Please vote NO on bill 510

Alesha Schandelmeier

Executive Director

The Center: 7 Rivers LGBTQ Connection  
230 6th Street South  
La Crosse, WI 54601

Dear Committee Members,

I don't want my child to have to live in a world where it's not okay to be yourself. Stop this, please.

Morgan Schmidt  
La Crosse, WI

*Morgan Schmidt*

To the Assembly Committee on Family Law,

Please do not pass AB 510. This is merely an attack on educational freedom that would only hurt all students. When I was young and went to school in Eau Claire, my teachers always put emphasis on critical thinking and learning the stories of those with experiences different than our own. I am better for all of these experiences, and I only wish that I had visibility in school curriculum at that time for the LGBTQ community, which I am a part of. It would've helped me to accept myself much earlier on in life.

This proposed bill is similar to other attacks that we've seen the Wisconsin Legislature and others across the country carry out this year, in that politicians like yourselves are trying to insert yourselves into places where you have no expertise, such as doctor's offices and in the case of AB 510, the classroom. Making decisions for us on what we learn when you have no expertise in education, is reckless and inhibits the ability of all students to have a quality education.

This bill would only infringe on the rights of all parents and also endanger LGBTQ+ kids whose parents are not accepting of LGBTQ people. When I was young, I had trust in my teachers and we always strived to give mutual respect to each other. It breaks my heart to think that teachers are being pulled away from being able to actually teach and instead be weighed down by these terrible policies that no one is asking for.

When I was in school, they had banners and signs all over listing all of the values that the school abided by, such as respect, responsibility, kindness, honesty and integrity. AB 510 is a vile attack that would violate all of these values and encourage division and fear amongst parents, teachers and students. This bill would also be a chilling attack on free speech, individuality, the freedom to learn and much more.

Also, I must stress that it is not only right but important to have inclusion the country's full history in school curriculum. Black history and LGBTQ history are American history. All students, including LGBTQ students and students of color, have the right to learn the full history of the different communities in this country. We must be able to learn about each other to build a world that is more kind, accepting and inclusive.

The relationship between parents, teachers and students should be one that is positive and be inclusive of all students and parents. Letting one small group of bigoted parents be empowered to bully our teachers and disrupt classrooms would be terrible and destructive. Please vote NO on AB 510 and keep politicians out of classrooms.

Sincerely,  
Christopher Heizer  
Eau Claire, WI



Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Family Law,

My name is Rachel Niesen and I am a resident of and psychotherapist in Wisconsin. I was born in the Fox Valley and moved to Dane County with my family when I was 10 years old and attending Middleton Public Schools.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Assembly bill 510. As a psychotherapist, I am opposed to this bill because I believe it would increase the risk of parental abuse and childhood and adolescent trauma amongst queer and trans youth. Schools have the ability to offer a safe haven for many students for a wide variety of reasons whether that be providing structure to children growing up with a lack of structure related to housing insecurity or a parent's mental health or whether that be creating a safe haven of acceptance for a child who holds identifies that would be rejected at home. This bill would take away that safe haven and in doing so would also increase the risk of severe mental health challenges and suicide in trans and queer teens. Suicide rates are already alarmingly high in the trans population as a result of the psychological impact of harassment, discrimination, and social rejection. We should be doing everything we can to create communities of safety and support for all students- not creating policies for taking this away.

Sincerely,  
Rachel Niesen, She/her/they/them

I am writing in strong opposition to AB-510.

Pretending that certain events did not occur when, in fact, they did serves no one. Our children must learn as a part of citizenship development to have conversations about difficult topics and to create their own opinions. To deny them this opportunity is to deny them our history and the ability to learn from our mistakes.

Banning books and denying history smacks of authoritarianism and reminds us of what happened in Nazi Germany during the Second World War when books were burned and history was twisted to justify the holocaust.

We are better than this!

Claudette Hamm  
Milwaukee

Dear Members of Wisconsin Assembly Committee on Family Law,

I write to urge you to oppose Assembly Bill 510.

I feel strongly that AB510 would move education in Wisconsin in a terrible direction.

All students would be negatively affected by the provisions delineated in AB510 and its overall impact.

Educators, parents, and students would be pitted against each other under the terms of AB510.

The very purpose of education would be sabotaged by the elements contained in this bill.

Curriculum should be set by teachers and educational experts.

Please do not allow our schools and our students to be degraded by AB510.

Oppose Assembly Bill 510.

Thank you.

Jo Haberman

Maiden Rock, Wisconsin

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Family Law,

My name is Jack Sanders, and I am a resident of Dane County. I've lived in Wisconsin for 4 years; I am a homeowner and an active member of my communities here.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Assembly Bill 510.

As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to this bill because children are not property, and autonomy is a human right.

This bill will not only put LGBTQ+ youth at risk if their parents are not accepting of their identity, denies BIPOC students the ability to learn about their history, but strips ALL YOUTH of the ability to have education that will help them understand the world around them and adds undue burden to our already overworked teachers.

Sincerely,  
Jack Sanders

Dane County, 53704

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Family Law,

I write to vehemently protest AB 510, the ridiculous and short-sighted bill that seeks to restrict educational freedom and censor "controversial" topics in Wisconsin classrooms.

This bill is untenable. Who will decide what counts as a "controversial" topic? Why would you allow parents to review lesson plans? Parents are not trained educators. They do not have the expertise to know what should be taught or how it should be taught.

This bill is simply meant to harass teachers and degrade the quality of public schooling.

In addition, this bill strips children and youth of any autonomy at school, stating that parents decide what name and pronouns their children are allowed to use in school. Why? What is achieved, other than to waste the time of teachers and possibly put at risk a child or young person who doesn't feel safe at home?

I suggest you stop with these political stunts and start working on topics that actually matter, like paying teachers well, outfitting schools with better ventilation, helping students overcome pandemic learning loss, and making sure schools have the mental health experts and social workers they need to support our most vulnerable kids.

Sincerely,  
Lesley Bartlett

Madison WI 53726

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Family Law,

My name is Charley Blake, and I am a resident of Stoughton, WI. I've lived in Wisconsin for over 20 years. I am a lesbian parent of two children, who have been through the school system in Madison, Wisconsin.

I am writing to urge you to vote no on Assembly Bill 510. As a Wisconsinite, and parent I am opposed to this bill because it is mean spirited.

This legislation would have a chilling effect on free speech and interfere with a teacher's ability to do their job. It would also allow parents to decide what name and pronouns their children are allowed to use in school, as well as challenge a teacher's lesson plans for any reason.

Curriculum should be set by teachers and educational experts, not elected officials with political motives. At its core, AB 510 is an extreme political stunt that pits students, teachers, and parents against each other.

Please vote no!

Sincerely,  
Charley Blake  
Stoughton, WI 53589

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Family Law,

My name is Gillian Blake, and I am a resident of Stoughton, WI. I've lived in Wisconsin for 53 years. I am a lesbian parent of two children, who have been through the school system in Madison, Wisconsin.

I am writing to urge you to vote no on Assembly Bill 510. As a Wisconsinite, and parent I am opposed to this bill because it is mean spirited.

This legislation would have a chilling effect on free speech and interfere with a teacher's ability to do their job. It would also allow parents to decide what name and pronouns their children are allowed to use in school, as well as challenge a teacher's lesson plans for any reason.

Curriculum should be set by teachers and educational experts, not elected officials with political motives. At its core, AB 510 is an extreme political stunt that pits students, teachers, and parents against each other.

Please vote no!

Sincerely,  
Gillian Blake  
Stoughton, WI 53589

This bill puts too much pressure on public instruction. It is not necessary because teachers and public instruction is currently acting to protect the children. It makes demands that are against good christian principles. let the school boards handle it, not distant lawmakers!

Clarence Harms

Brillion, WI 54110



Dear Committee,

Curriculum must be created and planned by teachers and other educational experts, not by legislators and not by parents.

A student needs to have a name that fits their identity. Many prefer to be Katie, not Kathryn; Bob not Robert; or Kyle not Clarice. Students need to feel comfortable in their learning environment, and using the name they prefer is foundational to this. If parents can't abide by this they are of course free to do what they wish in their own home. However if they see their child thrive when the are understood and respected at school by their teachers and peers, it may be helpful to them in their home life.

This is a personal and family issue and it does not belong anywhere in the legislature.

Thank you for listening and respecting individual rights,

Deanna Blanchard

Oregon, WI 53575

To the Assembly Committee on Family Law:

PFLAG Door County is opposed to AB 510! We know how important it is for young people to be recognized for who they are and too often schools are the only place where that happens. That's why the suicide rate is already so high among LGBTQ+ youth!

Sandy Brown, she/her  
Founder

PFLAG Door County  
PO Box 213, Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Family Law,

My name is Holly Marley-Henschen and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for 13 years. I'm a business owner, journalist and holder of a master's degree in political science and international relations.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Assembly Bill 510. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to this bill because it endangers opportunities for our young people to learn. Deeming topics "controversial" leaves students' understanding of history and the world up to politicians, potentially leaving many students at a disadvantage for the rest of their lives. This can have detrimental effects on our state and country.

As a close friend to many teachers, I know their jobs are hard and often thankless. Giving parents the right to formally challenge their lesson plans on a whim puts a distracting burden on our underpaid and overworked educators. If we want to improve the educational environment for students, we should fund education, including teachers' salaries, classroom supplies and meals provided at school so children are nourished and able to pay attention.

I ask you to consider the first amendment. Free speech is the bedrock of our country. Part of that free speech is the ability to identify yourself as you are. Children should be allowed to use the pronouns they choose during the school day. It is respectful and helps our young people grow up to be confident and accepting. Transgender and nonbinary youth in our country have alarmingly high levels of mental health issues and suicidal ideation. It's not because they're trans and nonbinary. It's because they are living in a culture that, by and large, disrespects them.

I ask you to choose to be part of the solution in supporting all students in Wisconsin.  
Vote NO on AB 510.

Sincerely,

Holly Marley-Henschen

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Family Law,

My name is Leah Rolando, and I am a resident of Madison, WI. I've lived in Wisconsin for 8 years and currently work for a local nonprofit organization that supports people with substance use and mental health challenges. Before my current position, I worked as the state suicide prevention program manager through a different nonprofit and am happy to share data on why accepting and affirming environments for LGBTQ youth are the one of the greatest youth suicide prevention measures.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Assembly Bill 510. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to this bill because of the harm it would cause young LGBTQ students.

As a member of the LGBTQ community who is only able to come out as an adult now because of my supportive and affirming community here in Wisconsin, I remember how painful it was to navigate my identity and experiences as a young person questioning my sexual orientation in the town I grew up in. Fellow classmates who dared talk about their experiences as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender were told that who they were was ultimately wrong or sinful. When I tried to speak up in my family, I was "prayed about" or challenged by adults who "knew better." I've been unpacking this pain for years and still have not come out to close family because they are unwilling to have these conversations.

This bill would further bury these necessary conversations that help our young people now figure out who they are and steal the language they need to navigate the world around them. Teachers need the ability to do their job, and this bill would stifle that.

For additional data, see [this article](#), and this quote about the study in a [Trevor Project blog](#), "The findings of this study are clear: transgender and nonbinary young people who feel accepted by the people in their lives, are less likely to attempt suicide."

Please let me know if you'd like additional information.

Sincerely,

Leah Rolando  
4002 Hanover Street  
Madison, WI 53704

To the all representatives that will overhear the AB 510 Bill, Curriculum should be set by teachers and educational experts, not politicians with political motives. At its core, AB 510 is a political stunt that aims to restrict educational freedom and censor "controversial" topics in Wisconsin classrooms. This bill appears to be targeted against certain kids, but the truth is that it hurts ALL kids. This is an egregious attack on educational freedom.

Alex Barakhoev

Mt. Pleasant, WI

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Achilles Robinson, and I am a resident of Milwaukee. I've lived in Wisconsin for 2 years and I am a proud 24 year old transgender man. I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Assembly Bill 510. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to this bill because it puts queer youth in danger, dehumanizes them, and infringes on their rights as human beings. This bill will not only put LGBTQ+ youth at risk if their parents are not accepting of their identity, denies BIPOC students the ability to learn about their history, but strips ALL YOUTH of the ability to have education that will help them understand the world around them and adds undue burden to our already overworked teachers. This bill harms our youth, not protects them. Please vote no.  
Thank you.

Achilles Robinson  
Milwaukee, 53211

To: The Assembly Committee on Family Law  
Re: AB 510

The only sentence in this bill that I can support is:

“The bill provides that nothing in the bill authorizes a parent or guardian to abuse or neglect a child in violation of state law and that it may not be construed to apply to a parent's or guardian's action or decision that would end life. “

I do not agree with anything else. And since there are other laws that cover the ending of a child's life by a parent, this bill is unnecessary.

As for the reasons I do not support the rest of the bill, there are so many it makes my head hurt:

The schools have enough to do. The teachers have enough to do. Schools encourage communication with parents already and this does not need to be placed into law. You are limiting children from talking about or experiencing the world they live in, that is a diverse world. History is not arguable, despite many attempts lately to make it so, and allowing everyone to weigh in and expecting a school to honor the wishes of each parent's view on any particular school topic or on the curriculum is unmanageable. According to this, teens do not have a right to privacy related to conversations that occur with health care providers in a school setting?

Sincerely,  
Jeanne Rickert  
Madison, Wis.

I am Kathleen Burke, a parent of 3 children enrolled in the public school system, active in the Catholic church, and in its social teachings. I want my children to learn about all people and cultures, especially people who have been marginalized; furthermore, parents already have the opportunity to find out what will be taught in school and the agency to remove their children from the classroom and/or have discussions about subjects important to them at home. I would prefer our elected officials and their staff spend time, effort, and taxpayer dollars on more important issues. In short, I am opposed to AB-510.

Thank you.  
Kathleen Burke

Pewaukee WI 53072



Dear Politicians

Educators need to control the message.

Once students hear the message they can make their own decisions. Part of growing up is learning to draw decisions from the information they have read and have been taught.

I believe educators do an excellent job not sharing their personal leanings.

Jim

Please listen to the voices of the people directly affected by the rules/laws you propose to enforce. As a retired school counselor and a lesbian I can speak to both issues dealing with educators curriculums and childrens personal lives. I enjoyed many years of support from my co-workers, families, school board and administrators. My expertise in my field was respected and my choices were valued. I interacted with many different kinds of people and experienced a wide variety of cultures and lives. I believe it is essential that children receive education about people who are different from themselves. This information needs to be factual and relevant to their age group. Knowledge about others helps to bring awareness of differences and similarities to students and broadens their world view. When we know more about each other-we fear each other less, and are more likely to feel comfortable together. People's efforts to control public school education without knowledge and experience of what is being taught is an effort to force all people into the same belief system. Public schools must provide for a wide variety of different types of families and children and therefore must be allowed to to address the issues that affect the many types of people they serve. Educators implore you to value their education, expertise and intentions. Children who do not fit into traditional gender norms and who feel they are mislabeled by society have a right to be heard and respected. Listen to their hearts cry with fear and rejection when others try to tell them who to be or how to behave, or what to be named. Please respect individuals rights to claim their own identity.

Melani Fay

Onalaska, WI 54650

My name is Evan Hafeman and I would like to proudly state that I live in Wisconsin, but looking at everything now makes me wonder if I can. I wrote this because I actually care for people, do you?

This is a vile act where people will be put at a front line no matter where you look at it. Isn't your job to make people live freely and be happy? Do you even care about this world anymore? Well of course not. If you decide to do THIS you wouldn't care in the slightest. However, if you truly TRULY care for the people and people that you know and or love, then please don't go through with this.

This is not the way!

Evan Hafeman

To the lawmakers deciding on bill AB 510,

Don't you have any friends or relatives, who go by Bob when their name is Robert, or use a middle name for everything instead of their first name?

Do you really want to have to require paperwork so that a child can switch from Bobby to Bob to Robert at any given time, just because their parents have to sign off on it first? It's unreasonable. The child should be able to determine that easily. And if you want to say, oh, well, this law doesn't apply to that -- how do you think something like this could possibly be enforced without being that strict, if the school wants to protect itself from legal action?

What is really ridiculous is the idea that you can wrap cotton around any person age 0-17 years and prevent them from hearing about the very concept of race, class, or gender, and then expect them to be a well educated, fully functioning member of society at 18.

"policy must require the school board to hold a public hearing to address any such written complaints at least once every three months. The bill also requires that the process be timely, that it grant the school board the final decision, and that it allow a clear process to appeal that decision. The bill also allows a parent or guardian who is denied one of the rights identified in the bill to bring a civil action against a governmental body or official."

If this is enacted, any person, no matter how unreasonable, can waste taxpayer money by complaining and then claiming their complaints were not duly addressed and dragging the schools through the courts.

Education is a right for every citizen, every child here in our state. Parents who don't like how the public schools teach and want to get involved already have avenues to do so, and can homeschool, or talk to their children about different perspectives after school. A well-educated populace is a boon to the whole community. Wasting everyone's time with complaints about how children might learn things that make their parents uncomfortable is only going to encourage teachers to quit and move to Minnesota or Michigan, where they're more valued.

We need the rights of the children to be protected. Every child deserves a good education, and if their education is constantly being disrupted because of their peer's parents complaining about their rights, instead of exercising the rights they already have, then we are doing a disservice to all of the students in the classroom, and to the community as a whole.

Do not pass this bill. I expect better from you.

Lyric Itinerant

Members of the Assembly Committee on Family Law,

As a parent, a person of faith, and a supporter--and graduate--of Wisconsin public schools, I strongly oppose AB-510, the so-called "parental bill of rights", and urge you to oppose it as well. Parents already have many ways to be involved in the education of their own children, including communicating with staff at their children's schools, participating in parent-school organizations, speaking at school board meetings, even running for school board. For parents who wish to tailor the educational experience their child receives to their own personal views, homeschooling is the best option.

My own children are now adults. When they were children, I wanted them to be taught by professionals with a far greater range of knowledge, experience, viewpoints, expertise, and beliefs than I, or any other person, could ever provide. I wanted my children to attend schools where everyone did not look, think, or speak exactly the way we did at home. I received an excellent education in the Madison public school system; thirty-some years later, so did my children. I would like to be confident that the children who will be our state's workers, voters, and decision-makers long after I am gone are also being taught in the mind-opening and enriching environment that was available to me and to my children.

Thank you,

Ann Lacy  
Madison, WI 53704

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Family Law, Clerks and Staff:

My name is Lindsey Wadsworth and I am a resident of Racine Wisconsin I've lived in Wisconsin for 1 year and

I am Intersex and it is imperative that My voice along with many others in Our LGBTQI Community must Be heard.

I also believe that Our Information should Be heard and Taught in Our Public and Private Schools.

I also believe Our Parents should be educated as well about Life Styles and Maladies within our LGBTQI Community.

Please allow My Brothers and Sisters as well as Me to Be Well Represented in Our Intersexual Community among Legislation in My State of Wisconsin.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on AB 510. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because On his **Intersex Day of Remembrance**, we paid tribute to the lives and experiences of individuals whose voices and identities have often been marginalized or overlooked.

It's a day to acknowledge the resilience and diversity within the intersex community, a group comprising about 1.7% of the global population—equivalent in number to natural redheads or those with green eyes. Contrary to common misconception, intersex is not a rare occurrence. Instead, it represents a *spectrum of natural biological variations* in sex characteristics, challenging the traditional binary understanding of gender. Intersex people might be born with a combination of chromosomes, hormones, and anatomical differences outside typical definitions of male or female. Despite these variations, the struggles they face often involve societal misunderstandings, lack of awareness, and medical interventions without full consent. On this day, it's crucial to raise awareness, foster understanding, and advocate for the rights and dignity of intersex individuals, working toward a world where their voices are heard and respected.

We unite in solidarity with our intersex siblings worldwide, advocating for the recognition and celebration of their unique identities. Our ongoing pursuit of gender equality inherently encompasses the rights and visibility of our intersex siblings. We remain committed to amplifying their cause until a future where their voices are universally heard, acknowledged, and embraced is realized, striving for a world where their inclusion and understanding are inherent, eliminating the need for continued advocacy.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

Bills that censor education are political stunts that pit teachers, parents, and students against each other, and that hurts all of our kids. Instead, teachers and parents should be allies with each other and teachers should not be forced to violate the trust of their students.

Sincerely,  
Lindsey Wadsworth  
Racine WI 53404

Assembly Committee on Family Law:

My name is Colleen Waydick. I am from Madison, Wi and I oppose this bill censoring our teachers. It is targeting our lgbtq children and in doing so will make the schools a less safe environment for them. I almost lost my older child due to bullying. Representation matters. Acceptance matters. Censorship is wrong. Focus your attention on the real issues. Violence and bullying in our schools. Lack of resources. Kids going hungry. Our teachers have a very difficult job and they come to work because they care about our children. I trust them to do their jobs. Government officials and the church should not be dictating what is being taught.

Thank you,  
Colleen Waydick

To the Assembly Committee on Family Law,

I oppose AB510. This bill seeks to restrict educational freedom and censor "controversial" topics in Wisconsin classrooms.

This legislation would have a chilling effect on free speech and interfere with a teacher's ability to do their job. It would also allow parents to decide what name and pronouns their children are allowed to use in school, as well as challenge a teacher's lesson plans for any reason.

Curriculum should be set by teachers and educational experts, not elected officials with political motives. At its core, AB 510 is an extreme political stunt that pits students, teachers, and parents against each other.

I want my children and all children to be safe in who they are and have representation of that in their daily lives, especially in school where they spend the majority of their young lives. Government should spend less time legislating who someone is, and more time caring for the needs of that person.

Stephanie Birmingham  
Verona, WI



Dear Assembly Committee on Family Law,

I am saddened to see the continual effort to further alienate individuals. As a parent of a nonbinary child I have extra worries that they will have to face unnecessary challenges in order to find their way in the world. Nonbinary people, such as my child and their friends, have many internal challenges to overcome. Many nonbinary people already feel alienated and have other negative feelings that limit their ability to find a happy and safe place where they can be themselves. The role of the government should be to protect people from the types of unnecessary struggles other minorities have and continue to face. History has demonstrated many times that a lack of unity or excessive divisions only leads to failure. We may all take different paths, but are generally headed to the same destination.

I kindly request that you oppose or minimally not support AB 510.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,  
Brian Valiquette

Sun Prairie, WI 53590

Honorable members of the committee,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide my testimony today. I stand before you to express my strong opposition to Wisconsin AB510. This proposed legislation, in my view, poses significant risks and challenges that could have far-reaching negative consequences for our state.

First and foremost, AB510 undermines the principles of fairness and equality. The bill seeks to impose restrictions on certain individuals' rights and freedoms based on their gender identity. This goes against the values of inclusivity and nondiscrimination that we should strive to uphold in our society. Denying individuals access to facilities, such as restrooms or locker rooms, that align with their gender identity is not only discriminatory but also dehumanizing. It sends a message that some individuals are less deserving of respect and dignity than others, solely based on their gender identity.

Furthermore, AB510 could have severe economic consequences for our state. Wisconsin has prided itself on being open for business, attracting companies, tourists, and events that contribute to our local economy. By passing this bill, we risk damaging our reputation and driving away potential investments. Numerous companies and organizations have already taken a stand against similar discriminatory legislation in other states, and there's no reason to believe Wisconsin would be an exception. We cannot afford to isolate ourselves and hinder economic growth by enacting laws that discriminate against certain individuals.

Moreover, AB510 unfairly targets a vulnerable group in our society. Transgender individuals already face numerous challenges and obstacles in their daily lives. This bill would only exacerbate their struggles by stigmatizing and marginalizing them further. It is our duty as lawmakers to protect the rights and well-being of all our citizens, regardless of their gender identity. Instead of singling out this community for discrimination, we should be working towards fostering an environment of acceptance, understanding, and support.

In conclusion, I strongly urge you to reconsider and reject Wisconsin AB510. This legislation contradicts the principles of fairness, equality, and inclusivity that we should strive to uphold. It risks damaging our economy, isolating our state, and perpetuating discrimination against transgender individuals. Let us instead focus on legislation that promotes unity, respect, and equal rights for all. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Molly E. Butz

Honorable members of the committee,

As a 46-year-old lesbian, I would like to add my perspective to the discussion on Wisconsin AB510. This bill not only targets transgender individuals but also affects the rights and well-being of the broader LGBTQ+ community. It is essential to recognize that discrimination based on gender identity is closely intertwined with discrimination based on sexual orientation.

I have personally experienced the challenges and discrimination faced by LGBTQ+ individuals throughout my life. Growing up, I faced prejudice, exclusion, and even violence simply because of my sexual orientation. It took years of struggle and activism to make progress towards equality and acceptance. AB510 threatens to roll back these hard-won advancements by further marginalizing an already vulnerable community.

This bill perpetuates the harmful notion that there is something inherently wrong or immoral about being LGBTQ+. It sends a message that our identities are invalid and that we should be treated as second-class citizens. This is not only deeply hurtful but also undermines the principles of fairness, justice, and equal rights that our society should be built upon.

Furthermore, AB510 ignores the diversity within the LGBTQ+ community. By attempting to enforce rigid gender norms and restrict access to facilities based on assigned sex at birth, the bill fails to recognize the lived experiences and identities of transgender and gender nonconforming individuals. It is crucial to understand that gender identity is a deeply personal aspect of one's being and should be respected and affirmed.

As a lesbian, I have experienced firsthand the importance of safe and inclusive spaces. Access to restrooms and other facilities that align with our gender identity is not only a matter of convenience but also a matter of safety. Denying transgender individuals the right to use facilities that correspond with their gender identity puts them at risk of harassment, discrimination, and even violence. We must prioritize the safety and well-being of all individuals, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

In conclusion, I implore you to consider the broader perspective of the LGBTQ+ community when evaluating Wisconsin AB510. This bill not only perpetuates discrimination against transgender individuals but also undermines the rights and dignity of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer individuals. Let us reject divisive legislation and instead work towards creating a society that embraces diversity, equality, and respect for all. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Erika Jo Sommerfeld

Dear Assembly Committee on Family Law,

My name is Tara Curtis. I live in Madison, Wisconsin.

I vehemently oppose AB 510.

This legislation is yet another attack on free speech. It seeks to interfere with a teacher's ability to do their job. It makes schools and even more unsafe places for kids who identify as LGBTQIA+ while tying the hands of educators even more.

Curriculum should be set by teachers and educational experts, not elected officials with political motives. At its core, AB 510 is an extreme political stunt that pits students, teachers, and parents against each other.

AB 510 is another example of kids being used as political pawns to distract constituents from issues that actually matter, and real actual harm that is being done in our communities. I am sick of it.

Tara Curtis  
Madison WI

Dear Assembly Committee on Family Law,

Please vote "no" on Assembly Bill 510. I believe those of you who wrote this bill are acting on the benefit of the doubt that a parent deserves and needs 100% transparency from their child, their school, their surroundings in order to be the best parent they can be. I believe all of us are trying to be good parents. A bill like AB 510 goes against this however, because being the "best parent we can be" makes it so that we shouldn't hold so tight. The regulations this bill would attempt are efforts at strangling what needs some freedom. This means the deep and meaningful conversations that sometimes happen at school aren't, and can't be, scripted, so that parents who are uncomfortable with open dialogue can have time to feel more comfortable.

Or, instead of getting more comfortable with hard things, under this bill the parents would have time to opt their children out of important conversations. We don't need to talk less about kids being gay, and then gayness goes away. Gay people have been, and always will be, here. And talking more openly about people who are gay, or white people talking with and about people who aren't white, creates empathy. No one should be able to opt their children out of learning about friends and families from a world view, no one should say "no thank you" to learning how to be more kind.

Please vote no. I implore you on many levels, but mostly out of empathy for the kids around us who need more knowledge, more love, and more dialogue.

Thank you,  
Amelia McConnell

Oregon, WI 53575

I am writing to urge lawmakers to defeat AB 510. I trust our teachers to come up with a curriculum best intended for our children. Teachers are professionals who have invested years and many thousands of dollars learning their trade. How dare we allow a handful of extremely fearful and misled parents and politicians to rule over their years of expertise.

As parents of teenagers, my husband and I are wholly against interfering with teachers decision making. I wouldn't be so bold as to tell a plumber, or a lawyer, or an engineer how best to do their jobs. But as a taxpayer, it is my responsibility to let elected lawmakers know which bills I oppose, and I oppose AB 510.

Sincerely,  
Jennifer Andreshak &  
Matt Buchholz

Politicians need to stay out of classrooms and away from setting or delineating any curriculum areas. If they want to contribute to the education of Wisconsin's students - all of them, I suggest that they go back to school, get an education, and teach. Otherwise, leave our classrooms to our professionals. They are trying to prepare new generations for a very different future.

Mary Jo Fleming

*Mary Jo Fleming*

My name is Ashley Leavy from Brooklyn, Wisconsin. I oppose AB 510 because it targets certain children in our schools and ultimately hurts ALL kids. It also interferes with our teachers' abilities to do their jobs, which is already difficult enough in a climate of continued threats to funding, threats of violence, and overall pressure on our public school system. I urge the committee to stand with Wisconsinites and oppose this bill.\

Ashley Leavy  
Brooklyn, WI



Dear members of The Assembly Committee on Family Law-

I am writing in strong opposition to AB10 which would allow state legislators to impose their ideological will upon our public school curricula. The state has no business legislating what is taught in our local public schools – that is the job of our locally elected school board members and our educators. Republican legislators have bent over backward to use public money to subsidize private and religious schools under the thinly veiled guise of “choice” specifically so that parents who were interested in shielding their children from views and ideas that don’t align with their religious dogma had an educational safe space. Now they are trying to prevent all of Wisconsin’s children from having access to robust and yes, sometimes controversial educational topics.

Keep big government out of our public schools.

Heather Kuhl  
Wauwatosa School District  
Wauwatosa, WI 53213

Dear Committee Members:

The wording of this bill is giving a parent of any student the legal right to intervene in the classroom and dictate what a duly certified teacher is teaching their student at any time. It would be like me coming to your Committee meeting and telling you what you can and cannot discuss at a particular open meeting.

This bill, 510, is misdirected and so poorly stated, it will simply cause chaos. The parent issues discussed here are ones a parent takes to the teacher or the Principal. The wording of this Bill appears to be from a political action Committee rather than a legislator.

I respectfully request you not consider this Bill 510 any further.

T. Greg Bell  
Madison, WI 53705

Hello,

My name is Katie Kuick and I am also a School Social Worker for Milwaukee Public Schools. I want to speak on Assembly Bill 510 and urge you to vote no. While I understand that parents want to be informed about their children, this policy will be harmful to children. In my job, I work with students that identify as LGBTQ+. I see how alone they feel when they are too afraid to tell their parents about how they feel inside or who they may be interested in dating. School can be the safest place for students when their parents may not understand them. Teachers asking students what they would like to be called and then calling them by that name/pronoun only makes sense. It creates trust between students and staff and a safe place for them to express themselves. Regardless if parents think that it is a phase or they are trying to get attention, who does it hurt? Using their chosen name and pronouns only shows you care. Even if it is a phase, at least the child will feel supported through the phase and seen as who they feel they are at that time. If school staff hears of the chosen name and pronouns and then immediately shares this with parents, that will "out" students that may not be ready to share it with their parents. This scenario can be detrimental to the student's mental health.

Using names and pronouns that are assigned at birth/parent approved (when students do not identify as such) can:

- 1) Make students feel isolated
- 2) Make students disconnect from school (skipping school, not completing homework, not participating in extracurricular activities)
- 3) Make students feel like they have no control over their life
- 4) Make students feel like no one wants to get to know the "real them"
- 5) Many students may fall into depression/anxiety or go so far as having suicidal thoughts

Research shows that lesbian, gay, bi, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) teens are at increased risk of suicide and mental health issues like depression and anxiety. One of the most startling statistics: LGBTQ teens consider suicide and make suicide attempts at about *four times* the national rate for all adolescents.

**Using names and pronouns that the students identify with can:**

- 1) Make the students feel seen and understood**
- 2) Let students make safe choices for themselves because being called a different name or pronoun does not harm anyone**
- 3) Let students feel that they have a little bit of control in a world where all other decisions are made for them**
- 4) Let students express themselves**
- 5) Make students feel that they are not alone**
- 6) When students feel supported, they are more likely to reach for help when they are feeling depressed/anxious or having suicidal thoughts**

Please vote against this bill on behalf of the safety of all Wisconsin students.

Katie Kuick

Hales Corners, WI 53130

To the Assembly Committee on Family Law:

I oppose AB 510! I know how important it is for young people to be recognized for who they are and too often schools are the only place where that happens. That's why the suicide rate is already so high among LGBTQ+ youth! More information is necessary rather than less!

Sandy Brown  
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235

November 6, 2023

Dear Representatives,

We are emailing as a group of high school students at Bay View High School in Milwaukee, WI. We are a part of a Gender & Sexualities Alliance (GSA) club at our school. We are a safe space for students of all genders and identities. We want to share our concerns regarding Assembly Bill 510 and urge you to vote no.

1. If this bill passes, we could be “outed” to parents who may abuse us emotionally, verbally, and physically.
2. If this bill passes, minor children could be kicked out of their homes as a result. Many have nowhere to go. They are on the streets and may stop attending school all together.
3. For many kids, we start by coming out at school and trying to find what feels best for us before letting our parents know. Telling our parents is very permanent, whereas telling friends and/or teachers, can be temporary.
4. Students in the LGBTQ+ community can become even more closed off and apprehensive to seek out resources or help if schools will not give us the smallest support by using our chosen names and pronouns.
5. Bills like this will impact suicide rates in the LGBTQ+ community. This community already is at higher risk of suicide. Taking away supports at school can increase this risk.
6. We feel that this bill is meant to suppress us.
7. If our parents are homophobic/transphobic, we won't have a safe place to feel like ourselves.
8. If this bill passes, we are stepping back as a state. We are not thinking about the future of kids.
9. We already go through enough at home and school because of who we are. If this bill passes, students won't be able to be who they are ANYWHERE.
10. Please let us express who we are, which may be different from what's assigned at birth.

Bay View HS GSA Club Members

I am a student at Bay View High School in Milwaukee and I oppose this bill.

I am the child of an extremely transphobic and homophobic grandmother, if I were to be outed to my grandma I am more than sure that would be an extremely dangerous situation for me. I have had to hold my tongue at her constant transphobic and homophobic remarks, the hatred that she spews on a daily basis while claiming she doesn't have a problem with it. I am terrified of this bill and the possibility of being outed to her, I fear that she could kick me out or worse and I don't want to have to worry about that fear, it scares me. Please say no to this bill.

Onyx Ortiz

To: Assembly Committee on Family Law

I am opposed to AB 510. As a mother of a trans-daughter, her name is very important to her and I feel she should be called by the name of her choice.

Ricki Mitchell  
Sturgeon Bay, WI

Nov. 7, 2023

RE: Wisconsin Assembly Bill AB-510

To: Assembly Committee on Family Law

My name is Jayne Fischer, and I am writing this letter to ask that you please vote NO on AB-510. The parental rights enumerated in this law already are part of the “inalienable rights” that parents have regarding their children. What’s new here is Section 1, 48.9865, (a) “Controversial subject”, which includes the hot-button issues of “gender identity, sexual orientation, racial identity, structural, systemic, or institutional racism...” This bill appears to be “model legislation” that allows a certain set of politicians to signal that they are “doing something” about certain cultural issues, and it is a solution to a problem that doesn’t exist.

As a parent of grown children, I think that controversial topics should be debated when children have enough background in the subjects to understand the various points of view on the topics. Children should be able to discuss these topics at home to understand how their parents see the issues. This happened in the past with our own children and still happens today.

As a Christian, I am dismayed to think that we would not encourage teaching on the history of racial and indigenous issues. I personally was shocked when I heard the story about the racial massacre that took place in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1921. Many people I talked to agreed that they had never heard of it, either. In post-WWII, the inability for African Americans to access the benefits of the GI Bill, the implementation of Jim Crow laws, and redlining are all examples of “systemic racism” that actually happened. We need to discuss these issues in order to work toward a future where we acknowledge what happened and work to ensure that laws do not discriminate against law-abiding Americans. We must study history to learn from it.

Finally – and critically – considering a bill like AB-510 takes time away from the real problems we have in this state: gaps in broadband coverage, expensive and often inadequate medical care, lack of affordable housing, the need for gun-control legislation, skyrocketing child-care costs and lack of child-care facilities, financial help needed for families with young children... The list is long and requires the attention of our legislators. Please oppose AB-510, because it does not address the real problems in our state.

Sincerely,

Jayne Fischer  
5209 Falling Leaves Lane  
McFarland, WI 53558



Hello,

My name is Monica Bence, I'm a parent of 2 kiddos in Wauwatosa. My children will enter the Tosa SD next year and it is extremely concerning to me that if this bill were to pass, it could have damaging impacts not only for the safety of students but it would also significantly curtail the ability of our teachers to provide our kids with a well-rounded education. Education and development relies on introducing our kids to a broad array of subjects and yes, sometimes those topics need to be rooted in discourse or controversy to enhance our kids' critical thinking skills, sense of right/wrong, resilience, etc. Without this, we will have a much less educated population and one that is not prepared to adult life. At the end of the day, politicians have no place directing the content taught to our children and this bill has no place in Wisconsin schools.

Thanks,  
Monica Bence  
Wauwatosa, WI

Dear Committee Members,

We strongly oppose AB 510. We both come from families of educators--grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, brother, children, nephews, nieces, me and my husband. Our families have had teachers at all levels from pre-school through university in public school systems in many states. Many of us are or were parents of children in public schools. We were also all educated in pedagogy. I believe that book banning, that telling teachers and school districts what they can and cannot teach based on one's own religious views, and making teachers the arbiters of a child's right to name themselves and choose their own pronouns is undemocratic and dangerous.

This quote from GSAFE is succinct: "Curriculum should be set by teachers and educational experts, not elected officials with political motives. At its core, AB 510 is an extreme political stunt that pits students, teachers, and parents against each other." I think that is a very accurate statement!

Please protect everyone's right to a public school educational and teaching experience that is free from such undemocratic actions.

Erin Crawley and Mark Plane

Madison, WI 53704

Dear Committee Members,

Please don't participate in the divisiveness going on at a Federal level. The majority of individuals are not far left or right. We believe in having rights with responsibility. Education needs support and the ability to do their job. Fund their underpaid profession, don't restrict it or put undue burdens on them. Please stay in your own lane!

Respectfully,  
Kirsten Guthrie

Emerald, WI. 55441

**To: Assembly Committee on Family Law**

**I am writing to strongly oppose AB 510. The proposed bill inserts legislators with purely political motives into classrooms. Rather than attempting to address real issues, this bill is political theater that is designed to pit teachers, students and parents against each other.**

**Rick Petershack**

**Madison, WI**

To the Assembly Committee on Family Law,

I am writing in opposition to AB 510.

Public schools should be a safe place for children of all backgrounds. Teachers should be able to engage with students over issues of concern. I'm not sure why you are seeking to restrict the speech of teachers and further marginalize LGBTQ+ students. Wisconsin has traditionally had one of the best public education systems in the US. It did not get that way because partisan ideologues sought to restrict what could be discussed in the classroom.

I have been a practicing emergency physician in Wisconsin for nearly 20 years. I have seen first hand the mental health struggles LGBTQ+ youth face because of discrimination, ignorance and bullying. I'm not sure why you would seek to marginalize these struggling youth even further. Please stop with this culture war nonsense and address the issues that Wisconsin residents are actually concerned about. Don't Florida our Wisconsin.

Michael Lutes, MD

Waunakee, WI

To whom it may concern:

My name is Rodney Sanchez and I write today as a citizen of the state of Wisconsin and the United States of America regarding the censorship of the free sharing of ideas that's found in AB-510. It's appalling to me that subjects of vital import to a free thinking society, subjects that help us understand each other as people, and the actual history of the country, would be subject to control by the state. That is not the country I was brought up in, learned about, and thought was a beacon around the world of individual liberty, truth and justice. To suppress discussion on gender identity, sexual orientation, racial identity, and structural, systemic or institutional racism - all of which are vital to understanding who we are, where we've been, and where we're going as a nation - is a slap in the face to education and the foundation of individual liberty and justice for all.

With that in mind, I firmly urge you to oppose AB-510.

Thank you for listening,

Rodney Sanchez  
Milwaukee, WI

I'm opposed to this Bill.

Minors are not property and if they ask teachers to call them a name or use a pronoun they aren't comfortable telling their parent then that's the failing of the parent to make their child feel unconditionally loved.

Teachers already do not get paid enough for the ample amount of time they spend preparing classwork and grading classwork and keeping their classroom looking nice. They do not need to spend time making sure send letters home to parents. If parents want to know the curriculum they themselves can reach out to teachers, nothing is stopping them from doing so and if the parents do not like science and evidence backed curriculum they can choose to home school their children or have their child go to a different school with a different curriculum.

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Family Law,

My name is Shannon O'Donnell, and I am a resident of Madison. I grew up in Central Wisconsin and have been living in Madison for over 3 years after earning my undergraduate degree in Virginia and my graduate degree in Ireland.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Assembly Bill 510. As a Wisconsinite who only found the language to understand and express themselves as queer and non-binary in my adult years, I am opposed to this bill because of how I am still unpacking the trauma of how my experiences in school boxed me into a very limited and ultimately fear-based framework of thinking while growing up. This bill would only serve to further fuel and inflame fear-based beliefs about who is acceptable. We are all expansive human beings, and we all deserve permission and freedom to figure out and express who we are.

This bill will not only put LGBTQ+ youth at risk if their parents are not accepting of their identity, but it will also strip ALL YOUTH of the ability to have education that will help them understand the world around them and adds undue burden to our already overworked teachers.

Sincerely,

Shannon O'Donnell (they/them)

Madison, 53704



Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Family Law,

My name is Megan Spielbauer Sandate, and I am a resident of Madison. I've lived in Wisconsin for the past 5 years. I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Assembly Bill 510. I am opposed to this bill because I think it is incredibly harmful, and I am truly scared of the impact that it could have on students, parents, families, and schools along with our entire shared future.

First, students should be able to be their most authentic selves at school. This bill would negatively impact queer students, particularly trans and non-binary students. Students should be able to decide if and when they tell their parents what pronouns they are using or if they choose to go by another name. School officials should NOT be able to out students to their parents. That is not the school's place and will put the safety of trans and non-binary students at risk. As an adult who lives several hours away from my parents, I still don't feel comfortable sharing with them that I have been questioning my gender identity for some time now. I don't know how to explain to them that I dress the way I do because I don't always feel comfortable presenting as feminine. I hope to tell them one day, but it is my choice when to share that with them. That should also be true for trans and non-binary students in WI schools; they should be able to choose what name and pronouns they want to use AND whether they share that with their parents.

Second, as a Chicana, I learned so little about the history of Mexicans in the US and US-Mexico relations during all of my K-12 education. It was not until college where I truly started to learn about Mexican-American history. It was heartbreaking to realize how unaware of my own history I was. No one in my school was providing the historical context for my mother's and other members of my family's immigration to the US. Parents should not be able to "opt" their children out of surveys, questionnaires, or curriculum that teaches about Mexican history and political relationships between the US and Mexico because they think lowly of Mexican people, refuse to confront the oppressive nature of the US immigration system, or the US' history of imperialism. This is true for all curriculum that highlights the histories and cultures of any marginalized group. We create a more inclusive and equitable society by educating youth about our history and empowering them to create a world that is more aligned with their values. If this bill is passed, there will be children who lack critical thinking skills, are unable to challenge the status quo, and are all together less educated. We are also placing youth of marginalized racial, gender, and sexual identities at greater risk for harm in school and in the future by allowing parents to opt their children out of curriculum that teaches about systemic oppression.

Third, teachers are responsible for creating a safe and enriching environment for their students. This bill directly conflicts with that responsibility and will make it impossible for good teachers to do their jobs well. Teachers are severely overworked and underpaid; they do not need to carry the additional burden and fear of being sued or fired that this bill would create if passed.

I urge you to VOTE NO to this bill.

Sincerely,

Megan Spielbauer Sandate  
She/They  
Madison, 53704

**Jennifer Gaber**

**Regarding: Assembly Committee on Family Law hearing Assembly Bill 510**

**11/07/2023**

My name is Jen Gaber, and I am a concerned Madison, Wisconsin resident and friend to families and individuals who would be impacted by this legislation.

This bill will allow parents to sue the school for up to \$10,000 if they fail to meet the guidelines of this bill. The guidelines of this bill put a burden on already stressed, overworked teachers and administrators to provide timely notice of "controversial" subjects being discussed in the child's classroom and goes on to describe these subjects in ways that directly single out individual identities and experiences as these "controversial subjects."

Chief among my many concerns:

1. I have seen dear friends and family members who teach, stretched so thinly by time, budgetary constraints, and lack of resources coming to a point of breaking. They are true public servants working passionately at jobs that do not value them and continue burdening them with greater tasks and demands. This puts an undue burden on those teachers.
2. Much of what is listed as "controversial" is the very identity of individuals who are not white, or may not have identical gender or sexual identities, putting LGBTQ+ use and people of color in separate categories of "controversy" and non-acceptance directly impacting their well-being.
3. Controversy *is* education. When I was a Catholic school kid in the 80s, I participated in Debate Club, and we were expected to be able argue both sides of a controversial issue (even despite our Catholic upbringings which may have favored one side). This was how we learned critical thinking. This is how we developed our young minds and learned to think and gain greater understanding. This is not a threat; it is the whole learning experience.

Reject this path. Understand that controversial topics are what fuels thinking and the development of young minds. Respect the time and experience of teaching staff and administrators so that we can grow public interest in the profession and thrive. Respect that kids are experiencing all the world, community, personal community, and family and slowly learning more about who they are and what they think. Give them the safe space to grow and learn. Trust teachers and students.

Thank you for reading my testimony. Your time and consideration are appreciated.

**TO: Assembly Committee on Family Law**

**FROM: Rev. Douglas Clement, United Methodist Pastor**

**DATE: November 07, 2023**

**RE: Assembly Bill 510 – relating to: rights reserved to a parent or guardian of a child**

My name is Rev. Douglas Clement, my pronouns are he/him/his, and I am an ordained United Methodist pastor serving in the state of Wisconsin. I am writing in opposition to the proposed AB 510.

Growing up, I was taught that being a Christian and being an American meant embracing the wide diversity of thought, practice, and personhood that exists in our communities. I remember learning how Jesus told us we were to “love one another” (John 13:34) and how, as people living in the United States, we had the right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”. While there have certainly been times when we haven’t always lived up to these ideals, the act of striving for them (and of believing they should be for all people) were (as I understood it) fundamental to who we are.

As a United Methodist, I am part of a tradition and a movement that has fought throughout our history to make this a reality. Our own Social Principles call us repeatedly to work toward a society “in which human communities are maintained and strengthened for the sake of all persons and their growth.” (§161, *The United Methodist Book of Discipline, 2016*). We acknowledge that children and young people are “full human beings in their own right”, and we support “the development of school systems and innovative methods of education designed to assist every child toward complete fulfillment as an individual person of worth.” (§162.C, *The United Methodist Book of Discipline, 2016*). For all these reasons and more, I am compelled to speak out against this bill.

AB 510 fails to embody the spirit or the presence of this kind of community. The bill establishes structures and provisions that privilege the will of individual parents over the well-being of the whole. It restricts the opportunities for children and young people to explore cultures and ways of being beyond their own. And it creates an adversarial relationship between parents and school district staff that limits staff members’ ability to do what they were called, equipped, and certified to do.

The Apostle Paul observes in his letter to the churches in Corinth that we are all members of one body (i.e. community). “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.” (1 Corinthians 12:26). Indeed, it is the responsibility of each of us (as individuals) and of our government to “[p]rovide the care needed to maintain health” physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and relationally. (§162.V, *The United Methodist Book of Discipline, 2016*). This includes ensuring access to a robust, diverse education that broadens not only the mind but also the lived experience. And yet, the proposed AB 510 instead *withholds* such access from young people, thereby preventing them from becoming their full and best selves.

I ask you to give them the same opportunities that have been afforded to generations of young folks. Vote “no” on AB 510.

## **Upholding parents rights when it comes to their children and their education**

Dear Legislators, I support AB 510, which allows parents to have the major say in their children's education. We pay the taxes to the school systems to honor our rights to educate our children, so they can learn to become proficient in basic content areas. Teachers do have knowledge in those areas and we, parents, entrust our children to them to be taught those subjects free of political bias. We want our kids to be able to have top notch academic skills as well as social skills. The goal of school should teach reading, writing, math, and science, respectively. The broad-based morals and values of respect and empathy of everyone, no matter gender, religion, nationality, or disability can happen and should. That DOES NOT mean a school district or teacher can decide to usurp the rights and morals of parents, who want to protect our kids from gender ideology fads and "sketchy" science. Lately, things have been deemed scientific because it earns gross profits, not because it's true, healthy science being instituted. We, the parents, have earned that right by choosing to become parents. If parents want to teach their kids about trending social and gender ideologies, they also should have that right within their own homes. These are OUR kids! We DO NOT co-parent with the government! Schools should NEVER hide anything from parents when it applies to their children. Parents are lawfully responsible for their minor children. We became the United States of America to escape not only tyranny but also authoritarian government structures that wanted to control religious freedoms and speech.

Sincerely,

Denise and Matt Seyfer, parents of three boys who attended both private and public schools

Denise M. Seyfer

Alexandra Schweitzer  
W356N6665 East Stonewood Drive  
Oconomowoc, Wi 53066  
414-617-3720

November 8, 2023

Dear Chairman Roar and Committee Members,

Thank you for holding the hearing today on Parental Rights, Assembly Bill 510. I regret that I cannot be there in person to testify on the importance of this issue.

My name is Alexandra Schweitzer, I am President of the Republican Women of Waukesha County, I am also a founding member of Parents on Patrol, a board member of the up and coming Conservative Women's Action PAC and a fierce defender of our students right to an education and a true believer that the parent is the primary educator of the child. It is a true honor to write this letter and celebrate our Country with you. Thank you again for holding today's hearing.

On May 13, 2022 I personally saw the consequences of government over-reach and learned the consequences of asking questions of my local school board and questioning the educational materials used in our classrooms. *I was served a Cease and Desist*; I was told that I should *cease and desist* from asking for parental rights, I was told that I should *cease and desist* asking for all students to receive an education, not an indoctrination. I should just keep my mouth shut and leave education, and the curriculum our children are exposed to, to the professionals in charge of such decisions.

It is with a debt of gratitude to the Wisconsin Institute of Law and Liberty that the out of control school board was reminded that as an American citizen I have the legal right to voice my concerns. That the Oconomowoc Area School District School Board was out of reach and I was in fact allowed my rights as a parent and an American.

In February 2022 I was invited to testify in front of the Senate Committee hearing on behalf of parental rights. I spoke about age-inappropriate materials, like *The 57 Bus*, that were available to our students, I asked why teachers, administrator and elected officials felt that they had the right to sexually educate our children with little or no consent. I asked why our elected officials, who are employed by We, the Parent to represent us, the administration and staff felt it was incumbent on them to have controversial conversations with our children without consent.

During this time, I contacted the local school Board President and school leadership with my concerns. I directly quote his answer to my question:

***" [T]he discussion we had months ago was to review the selection of library materials standards and how we can refine that to our community, not academia's standards. We commit to using transparency and communication to help our parents know what is in their kids backpacks. I believe this because there is no single standard for appropriateness, and I believe in the 1st amendment."***

I was left bewildered by this statement as distribution of pornographic materials to children and the sexual education of students without parental consent is in fact **not** protected by the First Amendment.

In the May 13, 2022 Cease and Desist letter I was told that my direct quote of Mr. Wood was defamatory. In the response that was given my attorney's pointed out that my statement was referring to a text and email exchange between Mr. Wood and I, where the books that parents had contacted me about relaying their concerns was not defamatory.

I was also told that transparency is "alive and well" in the Oconomowoc School District, when I questioned further, I was ignored.

I also questioned the Board President about the board's public statement pertaining to the age-inappropriate materials accessible on student Chromebooks; I reminded him that as recently as August 2021 the school board publicly stated:

*I quote Mr. Wood directly, improper grammar and all:*

***After reviewing the digital library subscription the district has decided to discontinue the.... SORA. The decision was made due to the lack of ability to personalize to align with our OASD selection process and age guidelines. We're in the process of reviewing those procedures to include parent permissions for access to the young adult collections. If you wanted to come up here and read port[sic] to us, please don't. We've already took action on that we get it, it's important that parents are aware of what's getting in front of their kids. We're working as a district to put that front and center. Thank you for bringing to our attention and just know we are listening.***

I was hopeful that the issue had been resolved and no further action was required, and with that intent I open records requested a comprehensive book list from the district in September 2021. I was given an incomplete list; I received library books, but it did not include any books accessible through the Chromebooks, online library, including the much discussed SORA App or textbooks used by teachers.

Instead of addressing the important topic of age-inappropriate materials accessible to students, the district's lawyers accused me of "misinformation." I have yet to receive a response from any member of the school board to my numerous questions. I filed an open records request as to what is available to the students, I have yet to hear back. It has astounded me time and again that instead of doing the right thing and denying children access to these books a cease and desist was ordered and the books were never really addressed.

I have openly wondered why it is acceptable for elected officials to take our hard earned tax dollars and weaponize them against We, the People. I was within my legal right to question these books and demand accountability. These are our children and the government over-reach of trying to co-parent, if not completely strip the parental rights from the parents must come to an end.

I write to you today in support of Assembly Bill 510, and ask you, our public representatives to support it as well.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alexandra Schweitzer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Good Afternoon, my name is Steven Perkins from Elkhorn, Wisconsin. Special thanks to the committee chair and committee members for hearing not just my testimony but all our testimonies. The school district my children attend has a hiring policy in place where parents are to be involved in the hiring process for certain positions within the school district. Over 5 years ago the superintendent took it upon himself to no longer involve parents in the hiring process. He later said in a policy meeting that his children are students in the district and a lot of other teachers have children in the district so by the "letter of the law" they are covered. Now as the school board revamps and creates new policies they must word it as parents that are not employed by the school district.

The fact that we are here today discussing basic parental rights having to be put forth in legislation shows where our society is today. Unfortunately, all of us are responsible for where we are, however it is a blessing that we have the opportunity to point society in a better position. We are in a situation in society where we must define that an employee of a school district does not satisfy parental participation in a hiring process just as we must also legally define the rights of parents.

Thank you again to the committee chair and committee members for hearing our testimonies today.



WISCONSIN COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

---

## Testimony

To: Members of the Assembly Committee on Family Law  
From: Ian Henderson, Policy and Systems Director, (WCASA)  
Date: November 8, 2023  
Re: Assembly Bill 510  
Position: Oppose

---

The Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA) appreciates the opportunity to offer this written testimony for your consideration. WCASA is a hybrid organization: functioning both to support member Sexual Assault Service Providers (SASPs), while advancing the anti-sexual assault movement in the state and nationally.

AB 510 will seriously undermine sexual violence prevention efforts at K-12 schools across Wisconsin by censoring the topics that can be addressed in classrooms. Anti-racism and anti-sexism are at the heart of sexual violence prevention programming. Social norms that are associated as risk factors for sexual violence include racism along with gender socialization, which includes a rigid adherence to traditional gender roles about masculinity and femininity. In contrast, anti-racist instruction builds empathy in students, which is a protective factor for sexual violence, by helping students understand the world from another's point of view. Similarly, anti-sexist instruction seeks to counter an individual's adherence to traditional gender norms, thus counteracting that risk factor for sexual violence.

However, this harmful legislation requires schools to provide notice to parents any time a "controversial subject" will be taught or discussed in a child's classroom. The bill defines "controversial subject" as "a subject of substantial public debate, disagreement, or disapproval and specifies the term includes instruction about gender identity, sexual orientation, racial identity, structural, systemic, or institutional racism, or content that is not age appropriate." Additionally, parents would have the right to opt their child out of such instruction. We believe the language in this bill is so broad that it will create a chilling effect on schools to provide anti-racist and anti-sexist instruction, which as discussed above, will be extremely detrimental to sexual violence prevention efforts. While racism and sexism are by their very nature uncomfortable topics, that is not a reason to avoid examining their root causes, such as internalized racial and male superiority.

Finally, we believe curriculum development should be left to our teachers, not politicians. Lawmakers need to stop interfering in the classroom and instead focus on solving real issues facing our schools, like teacher shortages and inadequate funding. Additionally, the role of our teachers is to provide a safe and inclusive learning environment for our kids, free from bullying and discrimination. Bills that censor educators are political stunts that pit teachers, parents, and students against each other, which harms all kids. Instead, teachers and parents should be allies with each other and teachers should not be forced to violate the trust of their students.



For the reasons stated above, WCASA opposes AB 510, and we urge this committee to take no further action on this legislation. Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, you can reach me at [ianh@wcasa.org](mailto:ianh@wcasa.org).

From: **Anne Priyadarshane** <alpriyadarshane@gbaps.org>  
Date: Wed, Nov 8, 2023 at 10:21 AM  
Subject: Assembly Committee on Family Law AB 510

Hello,

My name is Anne Priyadarshane and I am a school social worker in Green Bay. I oppose bill AB 510 because data has consistently shown the dangers of mental health and suicide in the LGBTQ community when others in their lives are not supportive of the way that they identify themselves (ie. pronouns and names used in school). While I believe parents have rights, those rights are to **protect** their children and support them to be thriving, happy and healthy. It is not their right to decide how their child identifies themselves, which is typically something a parent traditionally has a negative viewpoint on because of tradition. What would be the harm in allowing a child to bravely share that although they were born one sex, everyday of their lives they feel it is wrong?

Thank you for considering the harmful effects of this bill as written.

Sincerely,  
Anne

From: **Deanna Kloster** <deannakatherine@yahoo.com>  
Date: Wed, Nov 8, 2023 at 10:23 AM  
Subject: No trans bill

I absolutely do not support The bill to limit children's right to defined themselves. Children who are allowed to identify as they wish, our nurtured and supported, become healthy and well adjusted adults. Children who are squelched and forced to identify as some thing not themselves become filled with shame. To the extent that it's safe, children should be allowed to pursue their own interests. In a similar way, if I took Child came to school one day and said they were Christian, or Muslim, the teacher wouldn't force them to be quiet or report it to their parents. Let children explore themselves.

I am writing to express my values and opinions to the Assembly Committee on Family Law. My name is Phoebe Burchill and I am a constituent from Ashland WI, 54806. I believe we all have a right to live as our authentic selves, and with freedom to access the healthcare that is best for each of us. I believe every child has the right to participate in the sports they love, no matter their gender or expression, they should be safe to engage in any activity they choose!

There are certain politicians who are weaponizing trans children to try to make us fear each other. They are hoping to gain political power by dividing us. We see through it, and we know better. I am opposed to AB 510, as I believe it will infringe on our basic human rights in WI.

Whether we are Black, white or brown, Native or newcomer, transgender or not, we want our kids to have the freedom to be themselves and pursue their dreams. Our public schools and our democracy already afford parents and caregivers the rights to engage actively and productively in their child's education. We need to keep the politics out of policy and leave educating to the professionals, not the politicians. And the best way to protect those rights is to fully fund and support those public schools. I urge a rejection of AB 510, to safeguard our children and their right to live authentically and freely without fear of persecution!

From: **Emery Rankin Utevsky** <erutevsky@gmail.com>  
Date: Wed, Nov 8, 2023 at 11:27 AM  
Subject: Re: AB 510

To the Assembly Committee on Family Law:

I write to you as a former public school student of Madison, WI. My name is Emery Rankin Utevsky, and I attended Madison East High School. During my senior year, I came out as transgender. Even though I come from a loving and accepting family, coming out as trans was an incredibly intricate, personal journey for me. As I started to know myself and explore sharing that part of myself with the world, I wasn't ready to talk to my parents, even knowing that they would accept me. The ability to come out at school first to certain trusted teachers was incredible.

Ms. Sarah Motl, World History & Sociology teacher at East High, was the first adult I ever came out to. Asking her to call me Emery in class but still refer to me with my birth name with my parents felt scary and complicated. Her willingness to meet me where I was, make space for me to be myself in her classroom, and allow me to come out to my parents when I was ready was pivotal.

This was my experience as a trans person with a safe, respectful family that I just wasn't ready to talk to yet. There are so many trans kids in Wisconsin who don't have my experience - who have parents who will reject, hurt, insult, abuse, or disown them if they come out. For those kids, school may be the **ONLY** place they can be their whole selves. AB 510 would prevent teachers from respecting these kids' names and pronouns, and respecting their privacy, when students come out to them.

Forcing trans youth to come out before they're ready or to people who aren't safe can range from emotionally harmful, like it would have been for me, to having serious consequences like physical violence, being kicked out of their homes, and suicide. Preventing kids from coming out at all can have torturous mental health consequences, too.

Mindy Fabian and Skylar Lee were trans students at Madison West High School who both died by suicide in 2013 and 2015, respectively. Both of them dealt with depression that was compounded by their experiences of transphobia and familial rejection.

Even a single accepting adult has the power to save the life of a young trans person. AB 510 would prevent public school staff from being that lifesaving adult. Please consider these stories and vote against this bill.

Sincerely,  
Emery Rankin Utevsky

From: [margit3099@aol.com](mailto:margit3099@aol.com) <margit3099@aol.com>  
Date: Wed, Nov 8, 2023 at 11:41 AM  
Subject: Do not restrict

I, Margit L. Gundlach, am writing to let you know that our state and country must not alter history by prohibiting the teaching of certain events. I believe the question is, "Are all historical events appropriate for all students at all ages?" My answer is, "No!" But what IS taught should be age appropriate and decided by a school governing bodies and teachers who will teach truth in this curriculum. No one outside these groups should decide on what should or should not be taught in our schools. The whole truth is always better than manipulated truths.

Thank you,  
Margit L Gundlach  
13 Leah Court  
Madison, Wi. 53711  
[Margit3099@aol.com](mailto:Margit3099@aol.com)  
Sent from the all new AOL app for iOS

8 November 2023

Dear members of the Assembly Committee on Family Law,

My name is Nick Eliot, and I am a long time resident of Ashland County, asking you to vote NO on Assembly Bill 510.

I am writing to you today not only as a professional, but as the father of three Wisconsin K-12 graduates. The implementation of AB510 would foster an educational environment explicitly unsafe for my children and many of their classmates. School is intended to prepare children to live in the world outside of their home. This includes understanding that there is a wide variety of individuals on this planet, and how to respectfully interact with that population. By encouraging the exclusion of LGBTQ+ and BIPOC people in the classroom, it erases the existence of half of our student body! Our local school district has large numbers of enrolled Tribal students, sometimes being the majority, how does framing their identity in such a manner foster a safe learning environment? When the classroom is not safe, children do not learn. Under AB510, all of my children's classmates would have not been given the tools to learn how to navigate a world with them in it without bullying and isolation. I know how hard it is already in the rural districts, and AB510 would only make it harder for these families.

As a professional who has worked with LGBTQ+ and BIPOC youth in an educational setting, I also have serious concerns about how AB510 interferes with our already existing goal to foster healthy alliances between educators, parents, and their students. Forcing an adult to violate the trust of a student undermines our ability to give them a launchpad from which to start difficult conversations at home. Teachers and school administrators have years of training on how to determine what is age appropriate, including existing state guidelines from the DPI. Legislators should not be making these decisions, the professionals should.

We have data from Goodenow in 2006, reinforced by the 2019 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health, showing that even the presence of a single supportive adult in the life of an LGBTQ+ student can reduce suicide attempts by half. In many cases, educators or school staff are that supportive adult, working to keep that child or adolescent around long enough to have the tools needed to work with their parents. This bill has a section stating it isn't intended to give parents the freedom to harm their child. Why does that not apply to LGBTQ+ youth as well?

If passed, this bill will undermine the sanctity of a safe learning environment for all students, and signals to teachers that we do not trust in their ability to do their jobs. Instead, we should be focusing on fully funding our schools, and providing the necessary resources to create safe learning spaces. Please oppose AB510.

Thank you,  
Nick Eliot  
54806

From: **Darian Glass** <dglass.4313@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, Nov 8, 2023 at 11:55 AM

Subject: Importance of Knowledge

Memories I would like to share with the Assembly Committee on Family Law,

My name is Darian. I was born and raised in Racine for 22 of my 24 years. Though I'm older now, I spent my whole school-career in Wisconsin, so the subject at hand today is deeply important to me.

I came out earlier than most of my friends (12) and was outspoken the whole way. I was unshakably confident, well supported at home, and had the great honor to be helped by some truly remarkable educators. If any of these things were even slightly less true, there is every possibility I would not be alive today.

Most of the burden I carried as a young, confident, queer person was educating the people around me. Not friends or family, often they were total strangers. As a child I was asked about topics that would make most adults grip their pearls; and sometimes it was adults doing the asking. Other times it was innocuous things, and those cut deeper still, "But how can two girls /love/ each other?". As if any middle-schooler is ready to unpack the minefield that is a human heart!

I stood tall, researched on my own, and prepared for these conversations like a professor giving a lecture. I was proud of my dedication and thoroughness, of my ability to hold my chin high. Nevermind the fact that my privacy was being invaded by people who had no right to my time.

But why was it necessary? Why was I, as a student, expected to fulfill an educator's role? Why are so few people aware of things that I considered obvious? And what happens to the children who are less confident, less supported, and less lucky than I? The ones who are forced to carry a burden of proof for a subject that-- I promise-- is just as nebulous and hard to navigate for gay kids as it is for straight ones.

By high school, my patience had waned. The ignorance of people around me cost me sleep, friends, and so much of my precious time. Time that most teens spend finding themselves, I spent justifying my right to exist. But there was hope; our GSA and its team of staff supporters. Even then it was mostly student led, older children teaching younger children information that could save their lives (Mental health, sexual safety, relationship dynamics, community resources, safe places, and the list goes on forever).

Meanwhile, my half-a-semester of mandatory health class taught me far less. Most of it was geared towards my straighter classmates and wasn't even applicable to my life. But I soaked it up and aced the class responsibly. Just because it didn't apply to me in the moment didn't mean I'd never need it. What if I had a friend, family member, or even my own child one day that will need to know these things?



I've met so many folks who sought self-education the hard way; vaulting into situations for which they were in no way prepared. The children who couldn't ask their parents, who couldn't find community, who couldn't comprehend their experience any other way... many of them barely escaped their youth. Some of them didn't.

One of those friends I lost was a trans man who hadn't quite understood himself yet. I was exhausted, they were overwhelmed... we had a falling out. As they changed, I failed to understand how their journey was affecting them. I, the self-proclaimed queer educator, was deeply ignorant of the struggles of someone so close to me that I once would have gladly died for him. The world lost this young man in 2020, and I never got the chance to tell him, "I'm sorry. I love you. I've learned." His ghost is heavy on my mind, and will be until my dying day.

Knowledge is the only safe guard against ignornace. And it is ignornace, willful or otherwise, that has singularly caused me the most grief in my life. People must learn things that make them uncomfortable; we live in a deeply uncomfortable world. If they cannot turn to educators, then will turn elsewhere to answer their questions. They will turn to fellow children, to reckless experience, to isolation and self loathing. There are few absolutes that I cling to in this world, but one of them is this: The idea that limiting education will "protect" anyone runs counter to the whole point of learning.

If you wish to protect children, you must arm them.

In all gratitude,  
Darian Glass

From: **Kristin Forde** <keforde@gmail.com>  
Date: Wed, Nov 8, 2023 at 12:00 PM  
Subject: Opposing AB 510

Dear Committee Members,

I am a parent of third grade student in Stoughton, Wisconsin. I own a home there with my life partner. I am a former educator who knows first hand the vital importance of curriculum that represents all people in our communities and classrooms.

Giving parents the power to interfere with a teacher's ability to offer thoughtful, critical and representative materials is a frightening threat to a society founded on the rights of free speech and life, liberty and pursuit of happiness for all. By allowing parents who fear discomfort associated with historic exclusion and oppression of Black, Indigenous, POC and LGBTQIA people to censor our educators, we interfere with Black, Indigenous, POC and LGBTQIA's right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness — through messages of denial, hate and alienation which threaten our young people's lives, freedom, and joy.

I oppose AB510.

Kristin Forde  
501 W. South Street  
Stoughton, WI 53589

From: **Darling, Caroline R** <DarlingCR14@uww.edu>  
Date: Wed, Nov 8, 2023 at 12:07 PM  
Subject: Testimony for AB 510 Bill

Hello, this is Caroline Darling from Whitewater, Wisconsin and I oppose the AB 510 Bill. If this bill passes, children will no longer have the right to a fair education, their teachers get to cherry pick on what is talked about, which might leave out "controversial topics". Taking out these lessons, the children will not have an open mind on various topics. This interferes with our right to "free speech". Another thing that this bill opposes that will not benefit children is having their parents decide what pronouns and name that they use in school. Children who identify as trans and live in a home that does not support them, school is their only resource where they get to be themselves. Giving the parent this right, it puts the child at risk for suicidality since they are no longer able to be themselves.

Sincerely,  
Caroline Darling  
Whitewater, WI 53910

From: **Sam Erickson** <samuellerickson@gmail.com>  
Date: Wed, Nov 8, 2023 at 12:08 PM  
Subject: Testimony -- opposed to AB 510

Dear Assembly Committee on Family Law,

Whether we are Black, white or brown, Native or newcomer, transgender or not, we want our kids to have the freedom to be themselves and pursue their dreams.

I'm writing to oppose AB 510 because it would force our kids into boxes based on what they look like or their gender identity. This bill fuels divisions between parents and exploits lack of familiarity with transgender people to exclude transgender kids from healthcare, school, and sports. We need to keep the politics out of policy and leave educating to the professionals, not the politicians.

Our kids deserve welcoming, accurate, and fully funded education. I urge you to make our schools places where children of all races and genders are free to learn all that they – and our country – have the potential to be.

Thanks,  
Sam Erickson  
Monona, WI

From: **Asher Felix** <marianafelixlee@gmail.com>  
Date: Wed, Nov 8, 2023 at 12:13 PM  
Subject: Testimony for November 8th

As someone who tried to come out as trans when I was 12 and was immediately shut down by my parents, I know how detrimental this bill could be for many trans youth with unsupportive parents. It took me three years to convince them that I should be able to be called by my preferred name at school. During those three years, I was absolutely miserable. Those three years were probably the worst of my life and included multiple suicide attempts. Even now, after my parents allowed me to go by my preferred name and pronouns, they are just tolerant of me doing that, not accepting. If it were up to my parents, I still wouldn't be allowed to express myself. Despite me saying that I'm trans for five years, they still brush it off as being a phase. Even though my parents don't accept me, ever since I've been going by my preferred name, I have been infinitely happier. Even without any gender affirming care, even with my parents still referring to me by my deadname, the fact that I'm being called by my preferred name at school and have teachers who support me has made it so that I have regained my will to live. Although I would rather be testifying in person, there is no way that my parents would ever allow me to. I know that my experience isn't unique. I've talked to multiple other trans people, both online and in person, who have told me about their experiences, and they are all very similar: a trans kid with unsupportive parents who suffers from depression and has attempted suicide at least once. It would be negligent of the government to pass a bill that would deprive trans youth of one of their main supports and cause suicidal ideation.

From: **Darling, Caroline R** <DarlingCR14@uww.edu>  
Date: Wed, Nov 8, 2023 at 12:21 PM  
Subject: Testimony for Bill AB 510

To all members of the Assembly Committee on Family Law, Clerks and Staff:

My name is Caroline Darling, and I am a resident of Whitewater. I've lived in Wisconsin for 4 years.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on AB 510. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because if this bill passes, children will no longer have the right to a fair education, their teachers get to cherry pick on what is talked about, which might leave out "controversial topics". Taking out these lessons, the children will not have an open mind on various topics. This interferes with our right to "free speech". Another thing that this bill opposes that will not benefit children is having their parents decide what pronouns and name that they use in school. Children who identify as trans and live in a home that does not support them, school is their only resource where they get to be themselves. Giving the parent this right, it puts the child at risk for suicidality since they are no longer able to be themselves.

If passed, these bills will cost lives. At a time when LGBTQ+ youth are already struggling with harassment and discrimination, we should be making it clear that they are safe and welcome in Wisconsin.

Bills that censor education are political stunts that pit teachers, parents, and students against each other, and that hurts all of our kids. Instead, teachers and parents should be allies with each other and teachers should not be forced to violate the trust of their students.

Sincerely,  
Caroline Darling  
Whitewater, WI 53190

## Testimony of Morgan Koo

Representative Donna M. Rozar, Chair  
Representative Amy E. Binsfeld, Vice-Chair  
Committee on Family Law

Morgan Koo  
(847)989-3488

Wednesday, November 8th, 2023

Opposition of AB510, Relating to rights reserved to a parent or guardian of a child

My name is Morgan Koo, and I want to express my strong opposition to AB510, a proposed legislation related to the rights of parents or guardians concerning their children. I believe this bill could have detrimental consequences on a child's educational experience and their ability to find a safe haven within the school environment.

For those children who rely on school as a refuge from the pressures they face at home, it is essential that they do not live in fear of their personal information being disclosed by the very educators they trust. As someone who was once a closeted bisexual, I found solace and security in my school's LGBTQ+ club. While I may not have been in immediate danger, this club served as a sanctuary for me. For those who are in situations where coming out could put their safety at risk, such a club could be a lifeline. If AB510 were to become law, it would mandate educators to report any signs of sexual behavior, potentially including the expression of one's sexual identity. Moreover, the numerous other restrictions imposed on children by this bill could create significant obstacles to their education. The provision allowing parents to withdraw their children from class for "religious or personal conviction" reasons is not only vague but also open to potential exploitation and abuse. We must carefully consider who gets to determine these limits and what they encompass.

In conclusion, the quality of education in Wisconsin, particularly for our youth, is crucial to our future. We should not disrupt it by providing parents with numerous ways to withdraw their children from classes or control their personal expression. Both of these issues have the potential to hinder growth and learning. Therefore, I implore the committee to reject AB510. Thank you for your time and consideration.

From: **Rosanne Northwood** <[rnorthwd52@gmail.com](mailto:rnorthwd52@gmail.com)>  
Date: Wed, Nov 8, 2023 at 12:26 PM  
Subject: AB 510

Dear Assembly Committee on Family Law Members,

My name is Rosanne Northwood, I am a resident of La Crosse, WI. I've lived in Wisconsin for 30 years. I have eight children and seven grandchildren. I volunteer and work in areas that support and value all people.

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on AB 510. As a Wisconsinite, I am opposed to these bills because it does not provide safety for our young community members. It strips them of the ability to live authentically and to be valued. The ability to share one's pronouns and to choose their name saves lives. Transgender youth have higher rates of suicide. 80% of transgender youth have considered killing themselves and 40% have attempted suicide. ([pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32345113](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32345113))

Limiting educational content and opportunities will further harm youth and not prepare them for adulthood. Harassment and Discrimination are real. The passage of these bills will harm youth. They will cause further division among schools, parents, and students. We can do better and must do better. Vote NO.

Sincerely,  
Rosanne Northwood  
La Crosse, 54601



From: **Vicki Lee-Springman** <vmleespring@gmail.com>  
Date: Wed, Nov 8, 2023 at 12:31 PM  
Subject: AB 510

To Assembly Committee on Family Law

I am sending this email as my written testimony against AB 510. I see this bill as another attempt to restrict educational freedom and censor “controversial” topics in Wisconsin classrooms. Elected officials with political motives are not best qualified to set curriculum. Please vote against this bill, AB 510.

Vicki Lee-Springman  
5721 Summerhill Ct  
Fitchburg, WI 53711

Memories I would like to share with the Assembly Committee on Family Law that explain my opposition to AB 510,

My name is Darian Glass. I was born and raised in Racine for 22 of my 24 years. Though I'm older now, I spent my whole school-career in my hometown, so the subject at hand today is deeply important to me.

I came out earlier than most of my friends (12) and was outspoken the whole way. I was unshakably confident, well supported at home, and had the great honor to be helped by some truly remarkable educators. If any of these things were even slightly less true, there is every possibility I would not be alive today.

Most of the burden I carried as a young, confident, queer person was educating the people around me. Not friends or family, often they were total strangers. As a child I was asked about topics that would make most adults grip their pearls; and sometimes it was adults doing the asking. Other times it was innocuous things, and those cut deeper still, "But how can two girls /love/ eachother?". As if any middle-schooler is ready to unpack the minefield that is a human heart!

I stood tall, researched on my own, and prepared for these conversations like a professor giving a lecture. I was proud of my dedication and thoroughness, of my ability to hold my chin high. Nevermind the fact that my privacy was being invaded by people who had no right to my time.

But why was it necessary? Why was I, as a student, expected to fulfill an educator's role? Why are so few people aware of things that I considered obvious? And what happens to the children who are less confident, less supported, and less lucky than I? The ones who are forced to carry a burden of proof for a subject that-- I promise-- is just as nebulous and hard to navigate for gay kids as it is for straight ones.

By highschool, my patience had waned. The ignorance of people around me cost me sleep, friends, and so much of my precious time. Time that most teens spend finding themselves,

I spent justifying my right to exist. But there was hope; our GSA and its team of staff supporters. Even then it was mostly student led, older children teaching younger children information that could save their lives (Mental health, sexual safety, relationship dynamics, community resources, safe places, and the list goes on forever).

Meanwhile, my half-a-semester of mandatory health class taught me far less. Most of it was geared towards my straighter classmates and wasn't even applicabl to my life. But I soaked it up and aced the class responsibly. Just because it didn't apply to me in the moment didn't mean I'd never need it. What if I had a friend, family member, or even my own child one day that will need to know these things?

I've met so many folks who sought self-education the hard way; vaulting into situations for which they were in no way prepared. The children who couldn't ask their parents, who couldn't find community, who couldn't comprehend their experience any other way... many of them barely escaped their youth. Some of them didn't.

One of those friends I lost was a trans man who hadn't quite understood himself yet. I was exhausted, they were overwhelmed... we had a falling out. As they changed, I failed to understand how their journey was affecting them. I, the self-proclaimed queer educator, was deeply ignorant of the struggles of someone so close to me that I once would have gladly died for him. The world lost this young man in 2020, and I never got the chance to tell him, "I'm sorry. I love you. I've learned." His ghost is heavy on my mind, and will be until my dying day.

Knowledge is the only safe guard against ignornace. And it is ignornace, willful or otherwise, that has singularly caused me the most grief in my life. People must learn things that make them uncomfortable; we live in a deeply uncomfortable world. If they cannot turn to educators, then will turn elsewhere to answer their questions. They will turn to fellow children, to reckless experience, to isolation and self loathing. There are few absolutes that I cling to in this world, but one of them is this: The idea that limiting education will "protect" anyone runs counter to the whole point of learning.

If you wish to protect children, you must arm them.

In all gratitude,

Darian Glass

From: **Marsha Connet** <marsha@wisconsinliteracy.org>  
Date: Wed, Nov 8, 2023 at 12:43 PM  
Subject: Let teachers teach  
To: testimony@fairwisconsin.com <testimony@fairwisconsin.com>

As a professional working in a statewide literacy program, I want to add my voice to those who are insisting that we allow the professionals, trained in education, to make decisions about how best to present important materials to students. As a parent, I want to know that my child is being presented with important information they need to exist in our world today AND tomorrow. I do NOT want politicians, or anyone else, to make these choices. It is my job to help my child process all that they learn based on the values and mores of our family, That's the strength of a family.  
Let teachers teach in the classroom. Allow parents to parent at home.

Marsha

To the Wisconsin Assembly Committee on Family Law:

My name is Robyn Schultz. I live in the City of Milwaukee, where an important aspect of my life involves serving as President of the Southeast Wisconsin chapter of Pride at Work, the AFL-CIO's LGBTQ+ constituent group. It is partly in that capacity that I would like to submit testimony on the matter of Assembly Bill 510, a bill that I strongly oppose.

Clearly, the language pasted into this bill has origins far outside of the State that you as elected officials have sworn to serve. Fundamental rights of parents and guardians have become a flag of convenience for an ongoing and concerted series of attacks on the rights and freedoms that are so central and sacred to the American experience. I will not bother to touch upon each of the sixteen points referenced in the bill. It is hard for me to picture anyone objecting to many of these ideas, including the right to notification about vaccinations, other medical issues, or surveillance and violence occurring on school grounds. Points pertaining to notifications about student progress and disciplinary actions are all obviously important and should be high priorities for teachers, parents and children alike.

Several of the other points, however, cause me grave concern, as their reach extends far into areas that go beyond the rights of any parent or guardian and which quite certainly are motivated by ambitions for inserting politically motivated wedges into communities. Some of the most important relationships that a child can have in their upbringing center on their schools. It is apparent that the objectives of parts of this divisive bill are to drive wedges between students, parents, teachers and district policy makers.

An example of this overreach pertains to point nine and the issues around 'controversial subject' matter. It would be easy to use this in ways that make debate on any topic off limits. Ideas recently subjected to 'substantial public debate, disagreement or disapproval' in America include the rights of every eligible American to get to vote, whether the Federal Reserve is handling the economy in the best way possible, who is to blame for climate change or recent spikes in prices, and what role artificial intelligence should play in our futures. This list also includes many very personal topics about religious liberty, rights associated with firearms, and whether people who are outside of the cisgender heterosexual standards, which are held in such high regard by some of the people who provided the language presented in this bill, should be allowed to live.

The deliberately vague language of the bill that speaks on age-appropriate material is clearly present to allow the addition of politically driven positions on topics to rise to

prominence within our schools. These targeted actions, with little regard for truth, stand to interfere with the welfare of our youth, and the cultivation of any sort of healthy discourse and debate which I believe to be pillars of our great society.

One final point that demands some discussion centers around point five of the bill. A situation where a parent is the last to know about their child's gender identity or preferred name perhaps needs to look inward, and not at the teachers or other school employees. Given the tremendous harm that comes from a lack of support and proper mental health care when facing difficult subjects such as gender identity issues, this clearly is an issue to be handled delicately and with the child's best interests at the center of any discussions.

It is clear that the language which this bill contains did not originate here, and that this bill does not belong in Wisconsin. It is based on division and establishing mechanisms for allowing significant overreach on the part of local school boards to push politically driven agendas into our schools.

I challenge you to accept the reality and gravity of your choice on this bill, and the potential impacts this bill stands to have on our young people's hopes to become well-rounded and informed citizens. I must insist that you recognize the consequences of this absurd overreach by the people who claim to be the champions of less government and parental rights and see it for what it is: clear politically motivated grasping at control where none is called for. I ask that you recognize these efforts for what they are, namely an attempt to dismantle essential mechanisms of support for the young people in our State, each and every one of which has enormous potential, and is worthy of love, respect and a future. I submit this statement to assert my place on the right side of history, and to ask that you commit to doing the same.

Thank you all for your time and your willingness to accept this testimony.

Respectfully,

Robyn Schultz

Submitted on 08 November, 2023

Hello,

As a concerned citizen of Wisconsin, I am absolutely appalled at this educational censorship bill. Not only is censorship entirely counterintuitive to education, the thought of creating an environment where children do not feel safe and loved and like they cannot express themselves or be themselves is the exact opposite to creating an environment where children can thrive.

This bill needs to be stopped. We as a statewide community need to be supporting our children. These students are people and we need to be supporting their rights. The suggested bill is an affront to their right to privacy; it is an affront to their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; it is an affront to their ability to seek an education; it is an affront to their personal safety; it is an affront to their ability to thrive. There has never and should never be legal codification that prioritizes how a parent merely wants to raise their child over the child's own health and well being.

These students are people. They have a right to determine what others call them. They have a right to privacy. We cannot pretend that this is a subject where adults, and the politicians putting it forward, have no bias.

Everyone who has a hand in this. All these people should be ashamed at putting their own politics and bias before the well-being of children. Saying this is about the "rights of parents" is a flimsy excuse to target an already incredibly vulnerable people. Both children and those who are LGBTQ.

This is not what even a significant population of Wisconsin wants. This bill is an act of bigotry and hatred. Outing children forcibly and allowing them to have absolutely no say in their own personhood or medical care is the real deprivation of rights. Again, **THIS IS NOT SOMETHING EVEN A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF WISCONSINITES WANT.** If it was, this bill wouldn't have been introduced and pushed ahead so quickly. We all can see this. I refuse to silently watch a very loud minority attempt to hurt children, hurt people, with reckless, awful policies.

Sincerely,  
A concerned Wisconsinite,

K. Ertel  
Manitowoc, WI



I am writing to state that as written this bill is potentially harmful to students and teachers.

This legislation would have a chilling effect on free speech and interfere with a teacher's ability to do their job. It would also allow parents to decide what name and pronouns their children are allowed to use, as well as challenge a teacher's lesson plans for any reason. Curriculum should be set by teachers and educational experts, not politicians with political motives. At its core, AB 510 is a political stunt that aims to restrict educational freedom and censor "controversial" topics in Wisconsin classrooms.

As a parent of 6 children I believe that teachers are given enough barriers to do their job. As a therapist I know the impact of having a child called by the name they choose to be called. I also know that not all parents are supportive of that and it is not good for a child's psyche to not explore who they are and understand their identity. Children are not puppets of their parents, they should be allowed some autonomy.

I will also point out that a 17 year old will be treated as an adult if they commit a crime in Wisconsin, but under this bill they cannot choose for themselves what name is used in school.

Paula Vestin, MA, LPC, NCC

Monroe WI  
53566

I'm writing to ask you to stop educational censorship. This cruel piece of legislation singles out an already vulnerable population, young trans people. Studies show this type of legislation is directly linked to serious harms among transgender young people.

Cassidy Wichman

*[Faint, illegible handwritten signature]*



November 8, 2023

**Testimony of Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice Opposing AB 510**

**Re:** AB 510

**To:** Assembly Committee on Family Law

**Contact:** Rabbi Bonnie Margulis, Executive Director, Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice, [wifaithvoices4justice@gmail.com](mailto:wifaithvoices4justice@gmail.com); 608-513-7121, Madison, WI 53719

I am Rabbi Bonnie Margulis, Executive Director of Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice. We are a statewide, non-partisan, interfaith organization dedicated to promoting social justice in Wisconsin. I am writing today to speak out against SB 510, which poses a danger to the educational process, stifles teachers' ability to teach challenging and important topics, and denies students the right to engage in honest conversations about issues that affect their lives.

In the Jewish tradition, the Torah teaches us 'do not put a stumbling block before the blind'. In restricting the ability of teachers to address 'controversial' topics in the classroom, this legislation places a stumbling block of ignorance before our students, rendering them blind to the complexities in our society that they will face as they grow up. Our public schools should be exposing our students to difficult and complex issues and helping them to think critically and speak knowledgeably about them. School is a safe and appropriate place to hold these discussions and to provide our students with the tools they will need to address the problems and challenges inherent in our society. We should trust our teachers to be able to do this in a respectful and age-appropriate way.

School should also be a safe place where students have the right to be treated with dignity and respect, no matter their age. This right includes choosing the name by which the student wishes to be addressed and the pronouns that fit their gender identity. It is disrespectful and dehumanizing to deny students this basic right.

Wisconsin's public schools are facing a crisis today. Teacher shortages and the relentless defunding of our schools have had a devastating affect on our educational system, which poses a danger to our economic future. A recent Wisconsin Policy Forum report showed that teacher turnover in the last year reached a record level, particularly in low-income communities and communities with a high percentage of people of color. The latest state budget continues the trend of the last sixteen years of reducing funds for public schools, even while Wisconsin sits on a \$6 billion surplus. I am writing today to exhort you to stop engaging in these dangerous proposals that serve merely to distract from the very real issues facing our schools. Instead, place your focus where it belongs – pass legislation that provides the kind of funding our schools, our teachers, and our students need in order to learn and to thrive.

## Berendt, Amelia

---

**From:** Kuick, Katie <silhakm@milwaukee.k12.wi.us>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 31, 2023 1:48 PM  
**To:** Rep.Clancy; Testimony@fairwisconsin.org  
**Subject:** Assembly Bill 510 Testimony

October 31, 2023

Dear Representatives,

We are emailing as a group of high school students at Bay View High School in Milwaukee, WI. We are a part of a Gender & Sexualities Alliance (GSA) club at our school. We are a safe space for students of all genders and identities. We want to share our concerns regarding Assembly Bill 510 and urge you to vote no.

- 1) If this bill passes, we could be "outed" to parents who may abuse us emotionally, verbally, and physically.
- 2) If this bill passes, minor children could be kicked out of their homes as a result. Many have nowhere to go. They are on the streets and may stop attending school all together.
- 3) For many kids, we start by coming out at school and trying to find what feels best for us before letting our parents know. Telling our parents is very permanent, whereas telling friends and/or teachers, can be temporary.
- 4) Students in the LGBTQ+ community can become even more closed off and apprehensive to seek out resources or help if schools will not give us the smallest support by using our chosen names and pronouns.
- 5) Bills like this will impact suicide rates in the LGBTQ+ community. This community already is at higher risk of suicide. Taking away supports at school can increase this risk.
- 6) We feel that this bill is meant to suppress us.
- 7) If our parents are homophobic/transphobic, we won't have a safe place to feel like ourselves.
- 8) If this bill passes, we are stepping back as a state. We are not thinking about the future of kids.
- 9) We already go through enough at home and school because of who we are. If this bill passes, students won't be able to be who they are ANYWHERE.
- 10) Please let us express who we are, which may be different from what's assigned at birth.

Bay View HS GSA Club Members



I am Peter Tarson, a high school student and close friend to many families directly impacted by the bill AB510, which would require schools to allow parents to audit the behaviors, political views, pronoun and name uses, and any critical statements about parents made by students. I want to beg the Assembly not to vote in favor of this bill, because the scrutiny that this bill will allow will severely harm child autonomy and any loving or meaningful connection between parents and children.

To be an adolescent is a time of great contradiction, the yearning to discover and become and find one's truth and joy while experiencing the great vulnerability of having one's youthful body torn away and the emotional overwhelm of one's future. While I understand the urge to take all of this away from our children because we love them, but these emotions are not caused by the media, children have held them for time immemorial.

Transness dates back to Scythian priests and precolonial Mesoamerican warriors. It is not a media trend, it is the immense overwhelm and falsehood at an existence that violates you and the immense joy of finding another. This is not a corruption of innocence, it is dysphoria during puberty that precludes innocence of the body and only allowing people the right to use names and pronouns that humanize them can ever heal this.

Unless children have a space to process their feelings where they do not feel monitored, that is accessible to all children, they will ultimately bottle them up as self-hatred. This is especially true of youth who are queer or trans—it has been shown time and time again that without a space to discuss these feelings with non-family adults people simply hide from the entirety of themselves to escape the wrenching pain of dysphoria, often ending in suicide.

This is not a matter of fault for the family—sometimes, people truly don't feel safe talking to those close to them. As much as we long to be there for our children, this is simply human nature, and the consequence shouldn't be fear and disciplinary hearings.

Ultimately, we become closest to people when we allow them to voluntarily discover and share their political views and grow. This allows everyone to heal and connect eventually, for we are all independent people. Parenthood is guiding one's children through that process, rather than presupposing a conclusion of it.

There is so much love and joy in seeing your child find and share their truth. There is so much love and joy in sharing intellectual debate and personal expression. If we constrain this, eventually our children will sullenly hide from us, afraid to be punished anywhere for thinking and saying and feeling. We cannot allow this restraint to come to pass. Vote against AB510 please. Thank you for your time.

## Berendt, Amelia

---

**From:** Joella Striebel <joellastriebel@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 7, 2023 7:39 PM  
**To:** Rep.Clancy  
**Cc:** Rep.Billings  
**Subject:** AB510 Testimony

To the Assembly Committee on Family Law:

Thank you for your service to the State of Wisconsin. What follows is my testimony in opposition to AB510.

My name is Joella Striebel (she/her/hers). I'm a lifelong resident of Wisconsin and have lived 37 of my 44 years in La Crosse. I'm a mother to two young sons in public schools in the School District of La Crosse, one of whom is transgender. I'm a strong supporter of public schools, educators, and LGBTQIA+ rights and safety. I served the La Crosse community as a Substance Abuse Counselor for over a decade before shifting my career to advocacy for a reproductive health organization.

While pursuing my education to become a counselor, I learned about the mountains of evidence that one of the strongest protective factors in the lives of at-risk youth is the presence of a caring and supportive adult. In an ideal world, this would be a parent, but the reality for many children is that their parents aren't equipped to offer the support and safety that children need to thrive. I grew up in such a household; my home was a frightening and unpredictable place where I was not safe to be fully myself. Fortunately, I did have safe and caring adults throughout my life, several of them teachers, without whom I may not have survived into adulthood to become a parent and serve my community.

Together with my husband, I've worked hard to transcend my abusive upbringing and cultivate a safe and loving home for my children. An indicator of our success is that our transgender child came to us without fear when he began to question his gender and stop identifying with the name we'd given him at birth. He tried on a couple of different names before landing on the one that legally became his last summer. The first new name he tried was one he started using at school before he shared it with us at home. His teachers were happy to call him by the name he preferred, and allowed him the autonomy to share it with his parents when he was ready. This helped support his learning, feeling supported by his teachers, and it helped him come to us with confidence when it felt right for him.

In spite of the support and affirmation he gets at home, our child had an unusually difficult last year. He faced relentless bullying throughout the school year, and a life-threatening medical emergency in January which we continue to navigate. Were it not for his teachers' consistency in respecting his chosen name and gender affirming pronouns, I'm horrified to imagine how his bully may have been further emboldened to escalate the bullying to levels even worse than what he experienced. His bully was permanently removed from the school when the bullying continued to escalate until the very last week of the school year. The bullying led my child to thoughts of running away or ending his life. Without the presence of supportive school staff, I may have been writing to you today from the perspective of a bereaved mother, rather than a grateful one.

I have no doubt you'll be hearing lots of testimony from folks in and around Madison and Milwaukee. These communities have far more diversity than ours, and kids there are more likely to see their identities represented and reflected all around them. In communities like mine, where there is less diversity and fewer resources for kids who are "different," it's all the more important that they have access to adults they can trust to confide in when home isn't a safe place to be themselves, for whatever reason.

I can never know what it's like to navigate the world as a transgender child, with or without parental support, in an environment as hostile as Wisconsin has become. Today, when I was talking to my child about this legislation to get his input on my testimony, he related his feelings to lyrics from one of his favorite songs, "Are we out of the woods yet? Are we in the clear yet?" He wonders if there is a future for him in the state that is the only home he or I have ever known.

I don't know what it's like to be a transgender child, but I do know what it's like to have to rely on adults at school being a safe haven when the adults at home are not. I know what it's like to be 44 years old, have decades of therapy, be a parent myself, and still be learning to be comfortable with who I am because of all the messages that who I am is wrong.

I believe that most of us who are parents want the same things for our kids. We want our kids to be happy and healthy. We want them to be confident in themselves. We want them to feel safe. I hope that we want these things badly enough that if, for whatever reason, they can't share things they are struggling with or questioning with us, that they have other safe adults to share them with until they're ready to come to us. For many of our kids, those adults are going to be found in the place they spend much of their time; at school.

Respectfully,

Joella Striebel (she/her/hers)  
La Crosse, WI

## Berendt, Amelia

---

**From:** Katie Kuick <kmsilha@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 7, 2023 1:17 PM  
**To:** Rep.Clancy; testimony@fairwisconsin.com  
**Subject:** Testimony Assembly Bill 510

Hello,

My name is Katie Kuick and I am also a School Social Worker for Milwaukee Public Schools. I want to speak on Assembly Bill 510 and urge you to vote no. While I understand that parents want to be informed about their children, this policy will be harmful to children. In my job, I work with students that identify as LGBTQ+. I see how alone they feel when they are too afraid to tell their parents about how they feel inside or who they may be interested in dating. School can be the safest place for students when their parents may not understand them. Teachers asking students what they would like to be called and then calling them by that name/pronoun only makes sense. It creates trust between students and staff and a safe place for them to express themselves. Regardless if parents think that it is a phase or they are trying to get attention, who does it hurt? Using their chosen name and pronouns only shows you care. Even if it is a phase, at least the child will feel supported through the phase and seen as who they feel they are at that time. If school staff hears of the chosen name and pronouns and then immediately shares this with parents, that will "out" students that may not be ready to share it with their parents. This scenario can be detrimental to the student's mental health.

Using names and pronouns that are assigned at birth/parent approved (when students do not identify as such) can:

- 1) Make students feel isolated
  - 2) Make students disconnect from school (skipping school, not completing homework, not participating in extracurricular activities)
  - 3) Make students feel like they have no control over their life
  - 4) Make students feel like no one wants to get to know the "real them"
  - 5) Many students may fall into depression/anxiety or go so far as having suicidal thoughts
- Research shows that lesbian, gay, bi, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) teens are at increased risk of suicide and mental health issues like depression and anxiety. One of the most startling statistics: LGBTQ teens consider suicide and make suicide attempts at about *four times* the national rate for all adolescents.

**Using names and pronouns that the students identify with can:**

- 1) Make the students feel seen and understood**
- 2) Let students make safe choices for themselves because being called a different name or pronoun does not harm anyone**
- 3) Let students feel that they have a little bit of control in a world where all other decisions are made for them**
- 4) Let students express themselves**
- 5) Make students feel that they are not alone**
- 6) When students feel supported, they are more likely to reach for help when they are feeling depressed/anxious or having suicidal thoughts**

Please vote against this bill on behalf of the safety of all Wisconsin students.



Katie Kuick  
12041 Parkview Lane  
Hales Corners, WI 53130  
608-792-0760

## Berendt, Amelia

---

**From:** Kuick, Katie <silhakm@milwaukee.k12.wi.us>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 7, 2023 11:29 AM  
**To:** testimony@fairwisconsin.com; Rep.Clancy  
**Subject:** sent on behalf of Onyx Ortiz

I am a student at Bay View High School in Milwaukee and I oppose this bill.

I am the child of an extremely transphobic and homophobic grandmother, if I were to be outed to my grandma I am more than sure that would be an extremely dangerous situation for me. I have had to hold my tongue at her constant transphobic and homophobic remarks, the hatred that she spews on a daily basis while claiming she doesn't have a problem with it. I am terrified of this bill and the possibility of being outed to her, I fear that she could kick me out or worse and I don't want to have to worry about that fear, it scares me. Please say no to this bill.

Onyx Ortiz



WISCONSIN INSTITUTE FOR LAW & LIBERTY, INC.  
330 E. Kilbourn Avenue, Suite 725, Milwaukee, WI 53202-3141  
414-727-WILL (9455)  
Fax 414-727-6385  
www.will-law.org

**Testimony in Favor of Assembly Bill 510**  
Assembly Committee on Family Law  
November 8, 2023

Chairwoman Rozar and Members of the Assembly Committee on Family Law: Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in favor of Assembly Bill 510. My name is Luke Berg. I am an attorney with the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty, and our lead attorney on our parental rights litigation. I am going to focus my remarks on the portion of the bill that addresses children's names and pronouns in schools. My colleague, Cory Brewer, will testify on the remainder of the bill.

As you are probably aware, multiple school districts in Wisconsin, including some of the largest—Madison, Milwaukee, Eau Claire, and Oshkosh, just to name a few—have adopted policies to allow and facilitate a child's social transition to a different gender identity at school, without notifying the parents or obtaining their consent. Some districts will even keep a transition at school secret from the parents. Imagine discovering one day that, for months, school staff have been treating your daughter as if she is your son, or your son, as if he is your daughter, without you knowing about it. I've received that call from half a dozen Wisconsin parents in the last few years. Unfortunately, this is happening more and more frequently, because the number of children struggling with this has exploded in recent years.

These policies violate parents' constitutional right to raise their own children, and we have brought lawsuits against three Wisconsin school districts on that basis. I am pleased to report that we recently won one of those lawsuits against the Kettle Moraine School District. But other school districts continue to have these poorly thought-out policies. The Legislature has a chance to correct this issue statewide, to protect parents and their children, and it should do so, as other states have done.

Now, I want to acknowledge here that this feeling—of being born in the wrong body—is a real experience that some people have. I cannot imagine what that must feel like, and I have only the deepest sympathy for those who go through that. Kids who struggle with this deserve love and support, just like every other human being made in the image of God. But the question is *how* best to help a child who goes through this.

The premise of these policies is that the only appropriate response is to immediately and without question "affirm" that the child really is the opposite sex. Think about how bizarre that is for a moment. We don't treat any other issue that way. No good parent gives their child anything and everything they want, no questions asked. Nor do we make medical decisions based solely on a child's self-diagnosis. Part of our job as

parents is to protect our children from themselves, sometimes. And it is a common part of human experience that people can come to believe false things, even about themselves. I know I have. Why should gender be any different?

Moreover, a robust body of research has shown that the vast majority of children who struggle with this ultimately “desist”—they return to comfort with their biological sex. But desistance rates drop dramatically for kids who transition. Because of this, many mental health experts believe that transitioning too early, and having adults treat children as if they are the opposite sex, day-in-and-day-out, can actually do long-term harm by reinforcing a false belief. In fact, for that very reason, many countries in Europe are quickly moving away from the so-called “affirmative care” model, and instead recommend a slower, more cautious approach, where the first step is psychotherapy to help children process what they are feeling and why. These school district policies effectively take that option away from parents.

But whatever you think about this issue, it’s beyond dispute at this point that transitioning is not the right answer for *everyone*, and that for some, it does harm. We know that’s true because more and more young people—especially young girls—are telling us that this is their personal story. You’re going to hear from one of them in a moment. Many of these girls transitioned, later come to deeply regret that decision, and explain how it harmed them. And if you listen to their stories, often what you’ll hear them say is, I wish someone had the courage not to just say what I wanted to hear, but to tell me the truth about who I really am.

Unlike the school district policies I mentioned, the bill does not prescribe a one-size-fits-all approach to this issue—it simply allows parents to decide, for their own children, whether a transition is best for them. That’s consistent with the norm that parents expect when they send their children to school. As any parent of school-age children knows, anything out of the ordinary requires a parental consent form: field trips, sports, taking an aspirin at school. These are far less significant than changing gender identity, yet all require parental consent. As Judge Maxwell put it in our Kettle Moraine case: “The School District could not administer medicine to a student without parental consent. The School District could not require or allow a student to participate in a sport without parental consent. Likewise, the School District cannot change the pronoun of a student without parental consent.”

I would hope this would be a bipartisan issue. We can disagree about when and whether a transition is the right response for children struggling with their gender. But we should all be able to agree that parents, who know and love their children a thousand times more than anyone else in the world, should be the ones to decide what is best for their children. Not school staff who barely know them. I would urge your support for the bill.

Luke Berg

[luke@will-law.org](mailto:luke@will-law.org)

Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty

Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Cory Brewer and I am also an attorney at the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty (WILL), a nonprofit law and policy organization. Over the last several years, we have represented public school parents fighting for the best interests of their children.

AB 510 creates a statutory and legal right for parents and guardians to make the best decisions for the upbringing and education of their individual children. Parents want to have a voice in their children's education. My testimony today will focus both on issues involving WILL representation of public school parents and also the impact of this legislation, which is critical to ensure that parents are empowered and their rights are respected.

*Right to Review Educational Materials and Access to Learning Materials*

Luke has already discussed the right of parents to determine the names and pronouns used for the child while at school. This legislation also empowers parents to have access to the learning materials used in the education of their child. Parents have this right under Wisconsin public records laws and the federal Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment. But parents encounter obstacles regularly when attempting to obtain information from their local school districts. Their requests are routinely delayed, denied, not taken seriously, or they are told they need to pay exorbitant fees.

WILL also wrote a letter to the Sun Prairie Area School District related to a violation of girls' privacy in a school locker room. We submitted an open records request at that time, requesting limited communications, records pertaining to district policies and locker room guidance, a copy of the district organizational chart, and information related to the Title IX coordinator for the district. In response to our letter, counsel for the district said WILL would have to pay approximately \$11,000 before any records would be released. To date, neither WILL nor our clients in that matter have been provided with any of the public records requested.

Back in July, WILL represented a public school parent from Eau Claire who had to file a lawsuit to obtain a document withheld by the school district. On the second-to-last day of the school year, a statement about the gender transition of one of the district teachers was read aloud to students in several classrooms and was concealed from parents. Parents simply wanted to know what was read to their children, but they were kept in the dark. Both WILL and our client asked for a copy of the script read to students under state open records law, and our requests were denied. After WILL filed a lawsuit against the district, and the day before the first court hearing, the requested documents were produced.

This legislation ensures that parents have access to materials related to the education of their children.

### *Right to Opt-Out and Be Notified about Educational Topics*

In Wisconsin, as well as other states around the country, parents have been leading the discussion about age-appropriate and academically proven curricula. This legislation does not require the removal of controversial curricula. Rather it provides parents with options to decide the educational experience and learning experience for their own child.

When we hear from parents about concerns with curriculum, the phrase we hear most often is: age-appropriate. This is entirely reasonable. But when parents ask questions, they are often silenced, mocked, or intimidated. It is not partisan to assert that children do better when families know what is going on in their lives. The more information parents have, the better they can support their kids emotionally and academically. Far too many schools keep families at arm's length, which could not come at a worse time. Kids would benefit if the adults in their lives worked together in their best interest.

Existing law gives parents a limited ability to opt their child out of some requirements. For example, parents have a right to be notified about their chance to opt out of human growth and development courses, which is essentially the sex education curriculum for Wisconsin. Districts may have an additional policy that allows parents to opt out of classes, but that is not a consistent policy across the state. AB 510 provides all parents access to information about what is being taught in the classroom and the ability to decide whether it is appropriate for their child.

### *Right to Engage with School Board Members*

During the pandemic, parents had a window into what their children were learning, or not learning, and they were disappointed. A rift was created between districts and parents. Since then, there has been a wave of parental activism. Parents have the best interest of their children at heart. Some districts have positive relationships with parents and guardians, but unfortunately many do not.

Parents should be equal partners in the education of their children, not the enemy. This requires engagement. We need to set the expectation that parents and families in the community should be *and will be* involved with the local public school district and the school district should create as many opportunities as possible to have that sort of engagement. It is important to remember that parents do indeed have a right to engage school board members in the district where their child attends school. While parents

do not have an unlimited right to speak at all times or in all places, they have this right to engage, and this provision ensures that districts meet this requirement.

*Right to Be Notified about Student Safety and Incidents of Violence*

AB 510 addresses the important issue of school safety. Specifically, the legislation requires a school to notify parents about security updates, disciplinary actions taken against their child, and if crimes or acts of violence occur on a school campus.

Ultimately, AB 510 creates a legal standard for state infringement of fundamental rights of parents and guardians through specific items enumerated in the bill. It also gives parents and guardians a way to hold the district accountable for their actions if the district is found to fail to meet the requirements of this legislation. While the hope is that local school districts would be responsive to parents' questions and concerns, the reality is that the provisions in the legislation are not being met today.

We hope the Legislature takes this opportunity to protect parental rights and do what is best for children. We respectfully ask that you support Assembly Bill 510. Thank you for your time today. Luke and I would be happy to answer any questions.

Cory Brewer  
[cbrewer@will-law.org](mailto:cbrewer@will-law.org)  
Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty

November 8, 2023

Chairwoman Rozar and members of the Assembly Committee on Family Law,

Thank you Chairwoman Rozar and members for holding a hearing on Assembly Bill 510. We are not able to provide verbal testimony today, but we hope you will consider our written testimony on this very important legislation, the parent bill of rights. Our names are Michelle and Jim Lepak, and we are parents of two children in the Stevens Point Area School District. Over the last several years, we have been digging deeper into various areas of concern within our school districts' instruction, practices, and policies that impact our two children daily. What we have found is quite disturbing, and we have been exercising our limited parental rights in these areas as much as possible. This proactive legislation gives us hope that parents will be in the driver's seat of their child(ren)'s education.

In the following paragraphs we will be sharing specific experiences that have impacted our family and our children's education.

*Right to determine the names and pronouns used for the child while at school.*

In September 2022, our freshman daughter started a new art class. This was one of the electives offered at PJ Jacobs Junior High. Our school district, like many, use Schoology. The first day of class the teacher requested the students to complete a 'Get to Know You' Google Form questionnaire within Schoology. This questionnaire asked general questions about hobbies and interests. But it also asked each student to provide their preferred name and pronouns. It also asked the student for the preferred names and pronouns to be used when connecting with the student's parents. Our daughter was significantly uncomfortable providing answers to these two



questions and shared this questionnaire with us. We immediately contacted the teacher expressing our frustration with these types of questions that imply that secrets will be kept between teacher and student from parents. After expressing our concerns, the teacher shared that our child did not have to complete the questionnaire, and it would not be graded. Yet, the instructions were clear that each student needed to complete this. It was not flagged as voluntary. The teacher refused to work with us. We scheduled a meeting with the principal and school counselor. They listened to our concerns, but there was no resolution to this matter. We then scheduled a meeting with the Secondary Education Director and Assistant Superintendent a few weeks later. They shared that the pronoun issue has been resolved. Yet, it was not resolved for us. As of 2023, our daughter continues to have educators ask her for her preferred pronouns at the beginning of classes. Administration has declined to present a pronoun policy for school board approval.

*Right to review instructional materials and outlines used by the child's school.*

In school year 2021-2022, our daughter started a Family and Consumer Sciences course, FACS 8 (required by the school district). We sent an email to the teacher asking to review the course materials, including lesson plans and supplemental materials because the syllabus shared that Human Growth and Development was instructed on. The teacher's reply was that we should share specific concerns with her, and she would answer them. We shared our specific concerns. She replied that she provides a parent opt out for the designated HGD unit (Unit 2) but did not respond with the lesson plan materials we requested. In fact, she denied our request even after we shared that it was federal law to provide us with these materials. It is also state law to provide instructional materials for HGD content in 118.019(3).

It was after contacting the Secondary Education Director that we finally received a curriculum outline of the course. We were not privy to any of the lesson plans. But what this outline did reveal was that the entire course was Human Growth and Development content and could not be required if a parent objected according to 118.019(4). We did not receive parent notification or explanation of opt out at the beginning of this course as directed by 118.019(3).

Our daughter was pulled into a separate room at the beginning of class (for Unit 1) by the teacher who shared that the discussion (gender identity) in class would be objected to by her parents. The teacher questioned our daughter on whether she was comfortable with our decision. She also asked about our family life. The teacher then sent her to the library for the class period. This was all without parent notification or consent.

Our daughter notified us immediately that this happened. We contacted the school counselor. We immediately requested that our child be withdrawn from this course due to what happened. We also cited that 118.019 allows parent objection and this instruction cannot be required. This is just one of many examples where our school district has denied parent access to instructional materials.

*Right to access records regarding the education of the child*

In school year 2021-2022, during COVID, our school district mandated masks. Our daughter was having difficulty wearing them. We requested exemption for religious reasons. We were denied but provided with an accommodation of a shield. Our daughter was worried about looking different from her peers. So, she chose to wear the mask.

Many teachers were harassing students on how to properly wear the masks. It was a constant power struggle. One morning before the first bell rang our daughter was standing with a few

friends chatting in the halls. Our daughters mask fell below her nose. A teacher started harassing her about it. His voice grew quite loud, which drew attention to our daughter. The situation grew rather contentious with the teacher threatening our daughter with disciplinary action. He also verbally threatened that he would throw her down the hall.

Our daughter immediately notified us of the situation. We requested a meeting with the principal. At the meeting, we requested to see the video footage of the incident, as this was now part of her education record because it related to disciplinary action. We shared that parents are to be provided with viewing that footage per federal law. We were denied. The principal stated he would review the video of the situation. In the end, he stated it was inconclusive as to what really took place. But he assured us that the teacher was instructed to no longer have any interaction with our child.

*Right to timely notice by the child's school of any surveys or evaluations*

This area is never-ending. Our children are constantly being bombarded with requests to complete surveys. For example, a teacher instructing on Entrepreneurship asks students to go to websites to complete third party surveys which ask questions about their political beliefs, personality traits, family relationships, etc. The teachers are sharing that this survey is voluntary, but then they assign a graded assignment that cannot be completed unless the student completes the survey. There is no parent notification or request for consent.

Another example, a Civics teacher asked our student to complete a survey on her political beliefs and how she would lean: Republican or Democrat. After completing the survey, she would have to complete an assignment answering questions about her beliefs.

We have been successful in opting out of these when we catch them in Schoology. But many parents do not know these surveys are being conducted so frequently. Students are pressured to complete these surveys by the teacher.

*Right to timely notice of controversial subject matter*

We have many examples to share in this area, but we will share a few significant ones in this testimony.

Example: In school year 2021-2022 our then sophomore attended History 10. The last unit of the course was called 'America and Citizens Well Being'. The syllabus detailed the content of this unit as "analyze and compare specific rights movements in American history.". After requesting the curriculum outline, most of the unit was instruction on LGBTQ+. The teacher required students to complete worksheets on gender identities and sexual orientation including vocabulary definitions of cisgender, transgender, pansexual, bisexual, two-spirit, etc. In addition, there was extensive teacher led discussion on gender identity. This led to a student asking the question of whether a student's race can be changed. The teacher shared with the class that she felt race could be changed if the individual felt this way. Our daughter is Ethiopian born, so you can imagine how this declaration from the teacher, that race could be changed caused significant confusion.

We presented our concerns to the Director of Secondary Education and the Assistant Superintendent in email correspondence, and a face to face meeting. We were met with opposition. We were told that the district follows DPI standards, and this type of content is what DPI states should be taught under the umbrella of "diversity". We also shared that instruction on sexual orientation and psychosocial development (gender identity) falls under Human Growth

and Development content. Therefore, there should be parent notification and explanation of opt out according to 118.019. These administrators instructed us that this was a “different lane”, and they are not required to do so. They essentially declared that they could teach topics that should fall under 118.019 and ignore the law in doing so. And, instead of having opportunity to review and opt out prior to the content, the school then makes the student experience the content before you can object to it.

Example: Secondary English Language Arts: Our school district has a document for ELA expectations and professional agreement. In this document, it shares that all ELA teachers will provide reading instruction to, “provide culturally responsive choices. Choices should represent a variety of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, various mental and physical abilities, and sexual orientation.”

Many of the teacher selected reading materials are of mature content. The reading materials selected have LGBTQ+ or social justice stories/slants. In our experience, our then 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, were provided with reading materials that had mature content warnings. Students were told that if they did not want to read stories with a mature content warning, they should select a different book from the list (which didn’t provide much choice). Parents were never notified of the teacher selected books with mature content warnings.

*How this has affected our family?*

As parents, we question every aspect of our children’s education. We have become investigators and reviewers of state statute. We now speak up at school board meetings, email our administrators, and contact our state representatives. We exercise every parental right we can

find in the law and school district policy. Our children now take courses online specifically in History and English so that we can review all content being taught to them. We find this is the only way to be proactive on controversial content and exercise our parental right to opt out. We also find that this is the best way to avoid activist teacher led discussion in the classroom. It is not what we envisioned for our children's education, but it is necessary in the current times we live in. But, we shouldn't have to go to that length and these extremes for our kids to have a balanced education.

It is with great hope that AB 510 finds it's way into state law. Public schools sure seem to be attempting to replace parents. And, when actively involved parents ask questions they should not be stonewalled. Schools should embrace active involvement in the education of their children for it is vital to their success. This legislation will encourage parental involvement and remove some of the roadblocks. We are happy to answer any questions that you may have. Please feel free to contact us at [shelljim@gmail.com](mailto:shelljim@gmail.com).

Michelle and Jim Lepak, Stevens Point, WI

Thank you Chairwoman Rozar and Members for holding a hearing today on Assembly Bill 510.

My name is Melissa Bollinger and I live in Elkhorn, WI.

In the spring of 2021, my son was studying for a social studies test for school. His study guide was incomplete and some of the answers were incorrect. I asked him for his textbook so we could work on the study guide together, and he said he didn't have one.

I didn't want that to happen again. In the fall of 2021, I met with the curriculum directors of our district to see the textbooks my children were using in school. Both curriculum directors stated that they do not use text books in Elkhorn Area School District. They admitted that this makes it more difficult for parents to see what materials are being used in the classroom, but it's the best of both worlds because teachers can use "updated" information without the cost of purchasing new textbooks.

During the meetings with the curriculum directors, my concerns of the social emotional learning curriculum were discussed. I was told by both curriculum directors that parents aren't doing their job so the school has to step in. This was and still is a very concerning statement from the two primary administrators overseeing what an entire school district of children, including mine, will be learning at school each day.

I have been unsuccessfully attempting to see what my children are learning in the classroom ever since.

I have met with the superintendent, emailed the school board, and spoken at school board meetings regarding the lack of parental access to the curriculum. I have referenced federal codes, state statutes, and local district policies citing the district's responsibility to approve curriculum and to allow access for parents to have full access to it.

But I have less access to what my children are learning than ever before. The middle school sends out an email each week with classroom newsletters. There used to be links for me to click on to see the videos or articles being used in class, most of which I would have to request access to view and most would be ignored, but this year there are not even links to click. The learning targets that my 7th grade son had for an entire week of social studies this fall was "I can demonstrate my knowledge" as he was learning about the Cold War. When I ask to see what they're using to teach the learning targets, I am told to log onto my child's Chromebook. Everything is being sent to the children electronically, why can't the parents also view it electronically? The more difficult it is to see what my children are learning only raises more concerns for me as a parent. I am striving to be an equal partner with the education of my children, but it is impossible when I cannot see what they are learning.

Parental rights numbers 6, 8, 9, and 10 would strengthen my ability to review instructional materials and outlines used by my children's school and to be aware of controversial subjects taught or discussed in the classroom with my children.

Points 3, 4, 5, 7. In the fall of 2021, I discovered that our school district had a Gender Support Plan which was not approved by the school board nor readily available to parents. In this plan, the district would have 10 business days to notify the parents about their child's desire to change genders. The district would attempt to notify parents, but they are not required to be at the creation of the gender support document for their minor child. This document states that children are not to be addressed by teachers or staff as boys or girls. It also states that it would be a violation of Title IX to not allow students the right to use the bathroom or locker room that matches their gender identity. Over two years of asking questions, it became clear that the school board was not aware of this document. When the document and a teacher training slide show became public, the superintendent and the school board was forced to address it. The superintendent stated in July that they are reviewing the document with a lawyer and will be making updates. It is November and there is still no updated information regarding this document.

Parents know their own children and have their best interest at heart better than any teacher, administrator, politician, doctor or any other person could. Please strengthen the rights of parents in Wisconsin. Thank you.



November 8, 2023

Thank you, Chairwoman Rozar and members of the Assembly Committee on Family Law, for holding a hearing today on Assembly Bill 510.

My name is William Brewer, and I reside in the Town of Addison. I fully support the content and intent of this legislation.

We have witnessed the gradual erosion in our society of the role of the parent in the lives of our children. This is the unfortunate result of the slow abdication of parental authority to those in positions of trust for parents: doctors, school districts, therapists and the like. Too many of these parties have thoughtlessly or intentionally misused or abused that sacred trust. I appreciate that AB 510 serves the public interest by legislatively restoring the proper lines of authority.

Only God determines the gender of a child. Parents derive their authority from God to name their children, decide where and how to educate their children, and make medical and other vital decisions for their children. Why? Because children need parents to protect their interests and equip them until the child matures enough to do that on their own. No individual, entity or organization has the right to infringe upon that authority, and I applaud our legislators for codifying that truth.

It's sad that we have to address this issue legislatively. It should be enough for all to simply recognize these truths and behave accordingly. But if it takes our Assembly and Senate to protect these God-given rights statutorily, then so be it. I stand in agreement with AB 510 and its Senate equivalent.

William (Bill) Brewer  
5758 Cedarview Court  
Hartford, WI 53027

Hello,

My name is Tammy Fournier and I'm one of the plaintiffs in *B.F. v. Kettle Moraine School District (KMSD)* in the Waukesha County Circuit Court. The court recently held that KMSD violated my constitutional rights as a parent by trying to socially transition my child against my wishes. The court ruled that the district cannot refer to students using a name or pronouns at odd with the student's biological sex, while at school, without express parental consent. While this is a major win for parents in the KMSD, the ruling doesn't protect other parents or children across Wisconsin. I've come here today to share my story and to urge you to protect Wisconsin Families by voting in favor of the Parental Rights Bill.

In late 2020, my daughter, who was then 11-years old, started to experience severe depression and anxiety. My husband and I tried to find her a mental health professional to help her work through her feelings but found it difficult to find someone who was available. Her mental-health crisis eventually led to thoughts of self-harm and questions about whether she could have been born in the wrong body. She requested to go to inpatient care, and my husband and I of course immediately obliged.

But instead of helping my daughter, the inpatient facility rushed to "affirm" that she was really a boy. On my first call with the family counselor, he told us that the only way to help my daughter was to treat her as a boy. If we didn't and she started cutting or attempted suicide, it would be our fault for not accepting her. When we asked the counselor if he had discussed any of her other underlying mental-health issues prior to making his assessment, he informed us he had not.

At the same time, my daughter was being praised by school staff for being strong enough to be who she really was and being told that she will be happier for it. The medical professionals also encouraged her to transition, including with medical interventions. They told her that "transitioning young was best," and that I was going to be her worst enemy if I did not respect her new identity.

Since everyone around her was rushing into this without any careful thought, I decided that I needed to do my own research to understand how best to care for my daughter to protect her long-term best interests. And after researching the issue in depth, I decided that treating my daughter as if she was really a boy was not going to help her. I instead wanted her to focus on her other issues before making any rash decisions. I especially wanted to avoid causing her greater distress by reinforcing that she was born in the wrong body or medicalizing her unnecessarily.

With research in hand, I reached out to the school to let them know that, when she returned from the in-patient facility, I wanted staff to address my daughter use her birth name and female pronouns until further notice. But instead of respecting my parental rights to direct the medical care of my child, I was told that the school was an advocate of the child and not of the parents, and that they would address my daughter by whatever name and gender she chose, regardless of my objection. I had no other choice but to immediately remove my daughter from the school to protect her, causing multiple weeks of turmoil as we tried to find a new school that would respect our role as parents. And I informed the school that I was going to look into legal action.

After I pulled my daughter from the district, I had conversations with both the superintendent and school board president about their decision. And it became clear to me that their decision was not about my daughter's best interests, but an assessment of legal risk. They were concerned that they

would get sued if they followed my decision. That is part of why this bill is so important; to give legal clarity to school districts that they can and must defer to parents about this serious issue.

Less than a month after removing my daughter from the school, restricting her social media, and parting ways with the mental health facility, my daughter started to desist. She shared with me that affirmative care really messed her up. The other adults around her made her believe that I was not looking out for her best interest and that her only option was to transition. Once she was removed from those environments, she realized that was wrong. It's been almost three years, and she is a completely different child. She has no struggles with gender dysphoria, and is happy that I intervened before things got out of hand. She hopes to become a lawyer to one day help others protect their fundamental rights.

Of all the things I've thought about over the last three years there is one question that haunts me. How have we come to a place in society that we are letting our young children, in the middle of serious distress, take the lead in decisions that can lead to lasting regret and that will affect their long-term quality of life? Especially when they are not mentally developed enough to assess the actual risk of their actions?

My most important job is to raise my children, and that includes bearing the burden of regret should I make choices that negatively affect them. Children should not be empowered to make serious medical decisions in secret from or against their parents wishes, especially by schools, who know nothing about their personal struggles, and don't have any expertise in gender dysphoria. That responsibility should lie solely with the parents. As the court recognized in my case, the Wisconsin Constitution protects parents' right to make decisions about what is best for their own children. Voting yes on the Parental Bill of Rights will ensure every parent in Wisconsin has the same protection that parents living in the KMSD now have without having to spend years in legal proceedings.

November 8, 2023

Thank you, Chairwoman Rozar and Members, for holding a hearing today on Assembly Bill 510.

My name is Steve Broadwell, and I reside in New Berlin. I have been part of the West Allis West Milwaukee (WAWM) school district for over 30 years (but recently moved to the New Berlin school district).

My children attended school in the WAWM district about 20 years ago. Based on my observations, conversations with residents that have kids in school, and school board reactions to parents that complain about policies, curriculum, masking, vaccine incentives, etc., it seems obvious to me that this district does not understand that parents have the primary authority for the upbringing and education of their children.

Many parents have removed their children from the district for bullying, and the district routinely retaliates against parents that complain. A bullying situation occurred that the school ignored until a child was hurt. The mom got a "win" against the district with the DPI stating the district ignored all of the district's own policies in the manner in which they handled this. The mom has estimated that the district has spent more than \$250K fighting this, rather than simply admitting they handled this terribly, apologizing, and holding people accountable.

Last school year, a 6<sup>th</sup> grade music teacher gave a presentation on his queerness, and proceeded to ask about students' pronouns. He had kids fill out a questionnaire on this subject, and offered to meet privately with any student that would like to discuss their pronoun. No parental approval was asked for prior to doing this. Incredibly, the teacher filed a complaint about a mom who complained, based on harassment due to his sexual orientation. The school ruled against the mom and said she was to no longer contact the teacher.

A district mom unfortunately was witness personally to a situation identical to the lawsuit WILL recently won in Waukesha regarding usurpation of parental rights. Her daughter, a recent graduate of Nathan Hale High School, was being called by another gender's name at school. Her mom reached out to the teacher, the principal, and the administration, pleading with them to call her by her biological name. Against the mom's wishes, school personnel continued to do as they wanted by using her preferred pronoun, incredulously asking the mom if calling her by her biological name was ok with the child. That should not matter! That is what the mom wanted. The principal told her the district typically calls a child whatever they want to be called. This district ignored this mom who knew what was best for her daughter. She was working with and following the guidance of mental health professionals who were advocating for her daughter with advice that would not worsen her fragile mental state.

In another situation, a teacher at Hale assigned the book "The Bluest Eyes" to her students, a book containing graphic sexual scenes. It has been banned in other districts across the country. Complaints are being slow walked through the system. Parents were not required to provide approval prior to this book being assigned, I am told that students who did not want to read this book (which they had to purchase) could drop her class.

The district Transgender policy states parents will be notified of a child's identity to be changed from their biological sex to that to which they identify.....**IF APPROPRIATE!**

I was told to sit down when I was making a comment at a school board meeting when suggesting that the transgender movement was a fad, a social contagion. The board president told me that was hate speech and told me my comment was finished. WILL sent him a letter telling him he violated my 1<sup>st</sup> amendment right, and he owed me an apology. The school board has not silenced me from speaking in any meeting since that letter was sent, but as of today, no apology.

Curriculum focuses on indoctrinating kids with the belief system of the left's ideologies, and there is no better example than a workbook given to Hale and Central (High Schools) titled **"High School Mathematics Lessons to Explore, Understand, and Respond to Social Injustice"**. If Parents had been notified and told they may request to review this book, my bet is 90% would not want their kids anywhere near these lessons, each of which (math book) starts with a social justice issue.

Unfortunately, school districts like WAWM are often either slow to respond parents' questions and complaints or they ignore parents completely. I support AB 510 because it will help change that. Parents should know what their children are learning in school and should have a right to direct their education and upbringing.

My name is Autumn Fournier. I went through rapid onset gender dysphoria when I was 11 years old and wanted to socially transition. In 2020 during the lock down I was extremely depressed and looked to anything for a sense of community due to the lack of socialization I had access to. As a result, I spent most of my time on social media and I was heavily influenced to transition to the opposite sex because I thought there was something wrong with me. When I went into an inpatient care facility I was immediately called Leo, which was my trans name, and referred to by opposite sex pronouns. When I left the facility in Winter of 2020, right before Christmas, my mom was preparing the school for my return, she had done research on the best way to go about a child that wanted to transition. She decided that she wanted me to go by Autumn and be referred to as a girl until I was mentally stable enough to make life changing decisions. Her requests were brushed off, and I had people telling me that my Mom was going to be the biggest difficulty in my life and that she was a horrible bigot. But my mom fought for me and won. I support this bill because if my mom never stepped in, I have no idea who I would be, or if I would even be alive today. Parents have the right to know and have control over their children's healthcare regardless of the school's opinion on what is right or wrong. My mom knew me better than the teachers and mental health professionals, and even better than I knew myself at the time. The school system does not know your children, only you do. That is why I support the bill, so kids do not have to go through the mental conflict and contradiction I did and do not aimlessly hate their parents.

---

November 8, 2023

**Dear Representative Rozar (Chair), Representative Binsfeld (Vice-Chair), Representative Hurd, Representative O'Connor, Representative Nedweski, and Representative Snyder, Representative Vining, Representative Conley, and Representative Cabrera:**

Thank you, Chairwoman Rozar and Members, for holding a hearing today on Assembly Bill 510. Our family resides in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin.

We fully support Assembly Bill 510 and the affirmation of parents rights in all aspects of raising children, specifically in the areas of education, health care, access to information and notification rights.

My husband and I come from a long line of public school educators and supporters. My Dad was a high school guidance counselor, we have three sisters who are teachers, and my brother in law was a teacher and now administrator. At the beginning of my career, I also worked at a high school as a school counselor. In short, we have long supported quality public education.

However, we have become alarmed at the state of public education in our community and state, specifically in regard to parent's rights and access to information. Last spring, our daughter was approached by a student in a women's locker room. This student announced they were transgender and then became fully naked, exposing male genitalia in the shower. Our daughter was upset and confused. When we discovered this information days later from our daughter, we repeatedly attempted to obtain information from the leaders in our school district. We were repeatedly dismissed both in writing and in person, and to this day, continue to have questions about how this occurred and what is being done to prevent this from happening in the future. In short, staff and administrators failed to follow up with our daughter in the immediate aftermath of this incident and did nothing to initiate communication to parents. They have been secretive, dismissive and manipulative in the little communication they have sent privately and publicly. It has been incredibly troubling and has eroded our trust in our public schools. We have also become aware of other troubling incidents in our school district in regard to parents rights in being notified of violence, threats and questionable curriculum choices.

It is our hope that Bill 510 will begin the process of restoring the viewpoint that parents are the experts in their children and need to be regarded as important partners in the education of their children. By outlining the need for transparency and collaborative communication, it is our hope that one day our public school system will better serve children and families.

We thank you for your consideration and support of Assembly Bill 510.

*Testimony submitted by anonymous Wisconsin parents and Wisconsin Institute for Law Liberty client.*

Laura Ackmann, Moms for Liberty – Winnebago County

Hello – My Name is Laura Ackmann, I am a MOM, a Grandma and the Chapter Chair for Moms for Liberty Winnebago County. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak today regarding Assembly Bill 510 and to provide my support.

I will start by saying that I find it appalling that we have to create a bill to outline that a parent has rights over their children who are under 18. Having said that, that is exactly where we find ourselves today. - Parents rights continue to be ignored and infringed upon in many of our classrooms, schools and districts.

Our educational institutions are indoctrinating our children with toxic ideologies that undermine our nation's most cherished founding principles and traditions.

In fact, we have to call these infractions out as they continue to happen across our state and parents are kept out of the communication in key situations in our schools.

For example:

- The parents in Sun Prairie were not aware of an 18 yr old naked male showering with 14 year old girls;
- Parents in Amery WI found out that 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders were given fruit flavored condoms during sex-ed class
- In Eau Claire, Sheboygan, Milwaukee, Elk Horn, Stevens Point – staff were told “parents are not necessarily entitled to know their kids identities”.
- In one town the school outright refused to tell parents the topic of school announcement...
- There have been reports that teachers have signs “if your parents aren't accepting of your identify, I'm you mom now”.

This insanity has to end and I want to thank this committee for stepping up and addressing this legislation.

Our educational institutions continue to push the boundaries of what and when they are teaching materials to our children, and I would venture to say most parents are not even aware of what is being taught in some of our classrooms. We send our children and grandchildren to school where they spend 8 hours a day. WE believed this was a safe place to send our kids, an environment where they would be taught how to read, write and learn math and science and a true understanding of the principle of what our country was built



upon, including learning about the constitution and bill of rights. That the values we hold at home would be upheld within the walls of their schools. This is not the case, and I would surmise it has not been for a very long time. Look at our proficiency ratings for math and reading – our children will not be prepared to compete on the global stage, but they will excel at being justice warriors for causes which they do not fully understand.

What is being taught to our children? There are lesson plans regarding sexual orientation and gender ideology starting with our kindergarten children providing them with alternative views on gender, biological sex and sexual orientation on a spectrum and encouraging them to self identify where they fit in along the way. Our teachers receive training that having only female and male genders is wrong and that all options need to be presented. I would argue that it is not the place of our educational institutions to teach this ideology to our children at any time, let alone in elementary schools where children do not have the capacity to fully understand the meaning of this information. Letting them spin the gender wheel and teaching their self made spectrum without parental consent should not be allowed. Teaching this ideology risks confusion and may conflict with parents' values.

At a minimum, parents have to educate themselves on the opt out process and laws within WI and execute their parental rights supporting their values and belief systems. We can no longer trust that our education institutions have our best interest in mind or that our beliefs are aligned with how to educate our children.

It is critical for parents to understand what rights they have and what expectations school boards and school districts are required to meet. Passing this law is a step in the right direction but will not fully address all the issues currently facing parents and children in our education system. I believe this legislation is designed to strengthen and protect the fundamental principles of parental authority and the well-being of our children.

Thank you again for your time and for the courage of this committee to address these critical issues.