

## House Bill – HB 4162

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I have served on the board of Genesee Christian School for the last 18 years and served as chairman of the board for the last 10 years.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today on this subject of bullying and harassment. This is obviously not a new problem, but perhaps has become a little more pervasive with the advent of social media which just adds to the different ways kids (people) can be bullied and harassed. Bullying has been around since the fall, since sin has entered into the world. There is no doubt a lot of reasons and motives why bullying takes place (i.e. jealousy, the need to feel superior over someone else, fear of other people's differences, etc.)

There are also varying degrees to which bullying can take place. By that I mean, there could be something like a harmless practical joke played on a victim and the victim doesn't think anything of it. It's a one off, there is no chronic harassment and the victim never really feels demeaned or threatened. On the other side of the extreme there are situations where a victim is bullied so severely that it ends in homicide or suicide.

So, the question is not whether there should be policies to address bullying and harassment. This problem definitely needs to be addressed with the appropriate policies. But rather, the question is, who should be making and dictating those policies?

There are 587 school districts and thousands of individual schools in the state of Michigan. I would make the case that each and every school district and school is unique in their own way. They all have their own unique communities and culture. So, for the state to mandate a one size fits all policy for all these local communities is not a good or appropriate solution. Each school district or school should be allowed to tailor their policies to suit their unique and individual needs.

In addition to allowing local communities govern themselves, let me also give you an example of how this bill (HB 4162) would be contrary to and violate Genesee Christian School's statement of faith and violate our First Amendment rights under the Constitution. As a Christian school with a Biblical world view, one of many things that is taught, is the fact that the Bible teaches homosexuality is sin and is contrary to God's laws of nature (Romans 1:26-27). Section 15.B.iv of this provision would mean that teaching this truth (i.e. homosexuality is sin) in Bible class or any class or anywhere outside of class for that matter could make a teacher, administrators or board members in violation of this provision. A private religious school with a Biblical world view should have the right to teach that world view without fear of retribution from the state. That is a First Amendment Right!

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I have no problem with the state mandating that all school districts and schools have a set of comprehensive policies to address the serious problem of bullying and harassment. I don't even mind if the state puts out a set of guidelines for those policies. However, I believe it should be the right of the individual school districts and schools in each local community, who knows what's best for themselves, to set and establish those policies for themselves.

Sincerely