

# Ohio bill threatens state funding for schools over transgender student names, pronouns

By **Laura Hancock**  
**Cleveland.com**

COLUMBUS, Ohio - Public schools could lose state funding for using student names and pronouns that don't align with their birth gender without written permission from parents, according to a new bill in the Ohio House.

[House Bill 190](#) also penalizes schools if administrators, employees or contractors even ask students for their preferred names and pronouns. The bill says schools could be penalized if the employees or contractor ask students to call them a pronoun or title that's inconsistent with the adult's birth sex.

HB 190 would apply to traditional public, charter and STEM schools, but not private schools.

The bill introduced Monday comes as conservatives, including Ohio Republicans, have [focused on legislation related to transgender youth](#).

That includes a bill passed by the legislature late last year, known as the Parents Bill of Rights, which takes effect April 9. It requires schools to notify parents if a student requests to identify as a gender that's different than their sex at birth, among numerous other requirements.

Sponsoring state Rep. Josh Williams, a suburban Toledo Republican, said last year's bill doesn't go far enough.

"We just believe that parents have a say. It's more than a notification. It's not good enough for a school to notify me that my son wants to go by a different name," he said. "I think it's essential that you get parental permission in order to do that. I think that's a parent's choice, and a parent's right on how they raise their children. So I would like to see it go a bit further."

Last year's legislation doesn't require the state to withhold money from schools for violations.

HB 190 mandates the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce to create a procedure for people to complain about alleged violations of the bill. DEW employees would have to investigate each complaint and submit a report to the DEW director.

If the director determines the school or its employee violated HB 190, DEW shall withhold 10% of the school's state foundation aid each month until the director confirms it is in compliance with the law.

Maria Bruno, a lawyer and executive director of Ohioans Against Extremism, an organization that promotes LGBTQ rights and a strong public education system among other policy positions, said right-wing conspiracy theorists believe schools will try to find loopholes in the law so that students can continue to identify as transgender.

"Their whole conspiracy is that teachers are acting in such bad faith that they need to be essentially muzzled," she said.

Bruno noted that the new bill might be premature, since year's bill hasn't taken effect yet, and the legislature doesn't know what that will look like in practice.

Last year's bill requires all local boards of education to adopt policies to comply with it by July 1.