Ohio State University Cooperative Extension Promotes LGBTQ Ideology In The Ohio 4-H Program

“If parents or volunteers don’t like that, then we are not the program for them.”

Kirk Bloir, Ph.D. Interim State 4-H Leader

Ohio 4-H LGBTQ+ SUMMIT

Background

On March 13, 2018 certain employees at the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) posted “4-H Guidance for Inclusion of Individuals of All Gender Identities, Gender Expressions, Sexual Orientations, and Sexes” on its Website, announcing that “This national guidance document has been adopted from a document created by a Western Region Program Leaders Workgroup ....It has been approved by the National 4-H Program Leaders Working Group and 4-H National Headquarters.” See Exhibit 1, attached.

The “Guidance” in fact was not approved by the USDA and did not reflect an official policy of the USDA but was posted without authorization by certain staff members. The Guidance temporarily posted on the national Website resembled policies established by the University of California office of Agriculture and Natural Resources in July 2017, in which the university claimed that “4-H prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender expression.” See Exhibit 2, attached. As confirmed by USDA to Liberty Counsel by letter of May 3, 2018, the claim “does not reflect USDA policy…this document has been misconstrued as setting national policy. USDA does not have guidance or policy regarding gender identity in 4-H programs. In response and in recognition of the error of publishing the document, NIFA removed the posting from its website on March 27, 2018.”

OSU’s Embrace of California “Guidelines”

Nevertheless, Ohio State University (OSU) Office of Cooperative Extension has fully embraced the California material and policies promoting homosexuality and transgenderism. Furthermore, OSU developed an extensive LGBTQ training program for 4-H leaders and students, presented as part of its “Professional Development Day” on April 27, 2018 entitled the “Ohio 4-H LGBTQ+ Summit.” 86 adults and 54 minors attended. Kayla Oberstadt, Ohio 4-H Program Manager at OSU, created a document providing numerous details about the radical nature of the Summit and further intentions of OSU to violate the legal rights of 4-H employees, parents and children. See Exhibit 6, Oberstadt PowerPoint, attached.
Summaries and Selected Excerpts

1. **OSU website registration materials for the 2018 Summit provided to Liberty Counsel did not include a box for parental permission.** Parental permission is a prerequisite to participation in all other 4-H activities for those under 18.
   a. The registration materials did contain a check box if a child required “financial assistance or have concerns about payment methods, please check this box. You will be contacted by an LGBTQ+ Summit Committee member to confidentially discuss financial needs.” See Exhibit 4, pg. 3, attached.
   b. **OSU refused to provide redacted copies of signed parent permission slips for Liberty Counsel’s review,** so it is unknown whether all or any of the 54 minors attended with parental knowledge and consent.
   c. OSU provided a blank “Photo Release” form as “evidence” that parent permission was required, in response to Liberty Counsel’s open records request.

2. **OSU offered LGBT materials and topics from LGBT activist groups on homosexuality and “gender identity”/transgenderism to children.** The program included one day of training for 4-H youth. Registration for the “YOUTH SUMMIT CHOICE 1” topics included “Coming Out About Coming Out,” “Don’t Box Me In: Understanding Stereotypes,” “Gender Identity 101,” “LGBTQ+ 4-H Alumni Panel,” “OUT on Your Own: Determining Whether Prospective Colleges Are Actually LGBTQ-Friendly,” “What is a GSA [Gay-Straight Alliance],” “What is Transgender.” See Exhibit 3, pg. 3; see also Exhibit 4, pg. 3 attached, as well as the following descriptions:
   a. A “Panel of 4-H Adults and Staff” “Current and former Ohio 4-H educators and Ohio 4-H alumni” shared “how to be a supportive ally from the perspective of their 4-H roles and respond to questions about coming out as a member of the LGBTQ+ community.”
   b. A presentation on “What is Transgender?” in which participants were “guided in learning the basics of gender identity including relevant terminology, the gender unicorn, pronouns, and how to best advocate for trans and gender nonconforming young folks.
   c. A presentation entitled “Don’t Box Me In: Understanding Stereotypes,” in which participants created “an individual ’Don’t Box Me In’ script” to share with presumably “unsupportive” adults, parents or others.

3. **OSU has confirmed that Ohio children attending 4-H camps and other events will be required to embrace LGBT “inclusion,” including sharing facilities with opposite sex individuals who “identify” as another sex.** See Exhibit 6, Oberstadt PowerPoint. OSU staff reported that 4-H programs in Ohio would observe the following non-discrimination policy not supported by Ohio law, which contravenes Ohio law regarding nondiscrimination based on “religion” and biological “sex:”

   We work to ensure that all 4-H programming is available to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to age, ancestry, color, disability, **gender identity or expression,** genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, race, religion, sex, **sexual orientation,** or veteran status.

   In addition, “Staff/Volunteers” would be trained to control “Terminology/language” regarding “introductions with pronouns,” the “Genderbread Person” (Slide 8, 15) and the concept that gender does not correspond to the male/female sex binary of “two sexes,” but that there exists a spectrum of “gender identities” that do not correspond with biological sex. See Exhibit 6, Oberstadt PowerPoint, slides 8, 15, 17.
4. OSU and Ohio 4-H consider parental disapproval of LGBT promotion a “challenge.” OSU staff trained leaders and youth to “help” youth who want to “come out” and who want to “identify” as another sex without involving parents. In fact, OSU staff listed disapproval by parents and staff leaders, negative reactions and families threatening to leave the Ohio 4-H program (or contact their legislators) as “challenges” that would have to be overcome. See Exhibit 6, Oberstadt PowerPoint, pg. 20.

5. Adult LGBT activists heavily outweighed “youth” involvement at the Summit. More than 86 adults attended, including Interim State 4-H Leader Kirk Bloir. The attendance list showed only four redactions for the names of minors. See Exhibit 5, pgs. 1-3. Yet, the Oberstadt PowerPoint states at least 54 youth attended. See Exhibit 6, Oberstadt PowerPoint, Slide 18.

6. Activist groups attended the Summit. Equality Ohio, Students for Cultivating Change, Kaleidoscope Youth Center, GLSEN Columbus and the Cultivating Change Foundation were represented. Numerous OSU programs were represented, with “[s]pecial thanks to the Ohio 4-H Foundation and the Office of Equity and Inclusion in OSU’s College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences for their generous support of today’s program.” See Exhibit 3, pg. 2.

7. State 4-H Chief: 4-H is not for parents who object to LGBT policies. The Columbus Dispatch reported:

Panel on Friday included how to navigate coming-out conversations and how to create inclusive learning environments, and questions included what to say to parents who don’t want their straight kids mingling with gay kids at camp. “If parents or volunteers don’t like that, then we are not the program for them,” said Kirk Bloir, associate state 4-H leader.

By adopting these guidelines and promoting these policies, OSU is flouting the state’s obligations to protect the privacy and safety of children participating in 4-H programs, putting children at risk for emotional distress and physical assault in restrooms and other private spaces that must now be shared in the 4-H program with members of the opposite sex.

In mandating radical ideology, terminology, and the use of false gender pronouns, OSU is also ignoring the state’s obligation to accommodate the constitutional rights of privacy and religious free exercise of 4-H employees, volunteers, and the vast majority of 4-H youth, and discriminating against them on the basis of their statutorily-protected biological “sex” and religious beliefs.

Ohio legislators must restrain those within Ohio State University and the Ohio 4-H program to impose their own sexual orthodoxy on children. No state funding should be made available for any program that goes beyond protected classes established by the State of Ohio.

Ohio 4-H must remain within its original mission, and must respect the rights of parents and children. Children must be free from state-sponsored sexual indoctrination and the harms that flow from it.
Ohio State University (OSU) Office of Cooperative Extension has adopted California LGBT policies promoting homosexuality and “transgenderism” in the Ohio 4-H program despite the objections of adult leaders, volunteers and parents. Some have questioned whether this is the case. Liberty Counsel’s memo and its exhibits, including the OSU “Diversity & Inclusion 101” PowerPoint, show the details.

After the 2018 Ohio 4-H LGBTQ+ Summit, OSU released a PowerPoint (Memo Exhibit 6) entitled “Diversity & Inclusion 101 - Working With LGBTQ+ Youth and Families” (hereinafter, “Oberstadt PowerPoint”) under the imprint of the “Ohio State University Extension” and the logo of the OSU College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. The document details the extensive steps already taken by OSU to promote radical ideology, and OSU’s further plans. The document states the LGBT indoctrination program has the “unwavering support from administration of Ohio 4-H, OSU Extension, and The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES)” It receives “Financial assistance from the Ohio 4-H Foundation and CFAES Office of Equity and Inclusion. It asks, “[w]hat has Ohio 4-H done to promote LGBTQ+ inclusion?” It answers, “Ohio 4-H” has “Adopted [California] 4-H [Practices] for Inclusion of Individuals of All Gender Identities, Gender Expressions, Sexual Orientations, and Sexes.”

The following additional analysis summarizes and quotes from nearly every page of the PowerPoint.

Oberstadt PowerPoint Slide 2 lists “Objectives,” including the use of “LGBTQ+ affirming language in [OSU] Extension documents,” and reshaping the 4-H “environment.”

Slide 3 defines “LGBTQ+,” including “transgender” and “queer/questioning,” as well as “+” – “all self-affirming gender identities.”

Slide 4 answers the question, “What has Ohio 4-H done to promote LGBTQ+ inclusion?” regarding “camp situations of gender identity and sexual orientation.”

Slide 5 continues answering What has Ohio 4-H done to promote LGBTQ+ inclusion?” by listing the “Ohio 4-H LGBTQ+ Summit,” and states “Ohio 4-H” has “Adopted [California] 4-H Guidelines [sic] [Practices] for Inclusion of Individuals of All Gender Identities, Gender Expressions, Sexual Orientations, and Sexes,” promulgated by the University of California. Slide 24 lists the correct name. The California document includes policies and FAQs, explicitly stating that boys and girls will sleep, use the restroom, and shower, together:

5. Our overnight 4-H event or camp has a girls’ section and a boys’ section. Where should people who identify as transgender or intersex sleep, use the restroom, and shower?

When there are gender segregated facilities and/or activities, individuals who identify as transgender or intersex must be allowed to sleep, use the restroom, shower and participate in alignment with their gender identity. Some individuals who are early in the stages of gender transition may feel more comfortable participating in alignment with their sex assigned at birth, which is okay too. Do not require an individual to utilize single-user facilities (sleeping, restroom, or shower) unless the other participants are also required to do so. (Emphasis added).
Slide 6 sets forth Ohio 4-H’s policy of “Appropriate Introductions (pronouns),” which includes promoting the use of pronouns “She, Her, and Hers” for boys identifying as girls; “He, Him, and His,” for girls identifying as boys; the non-grammatically-correct plural “They, Them, and Theirs,” applied to individuals; and the fabricated and nonsensical “Zie, Zir, and Zirs.” Staff are additionally told to make introductions to children with “their” pronouns, implying that pronouns are subjective, and not objective or consistent with biological sex.

Oberstadt PowerPoint Slides 6 and 7 introduce LGBT terminology definitions, and the “Genderbread Person,” who informs children that there is a “Gender Identity” spectrum, with “woman” on the left, “man” on the right, and “genderqueer” in the middle.

Slide 9 is an inking of Ohio 4-H’s new policy of separating children by “gender,” rather than biological “sex” of male and female. Page 10 is a practice exercise of “Determining cabin assignments of an individual.” Numerous celebrity names are misgendered as the opposite sex. “Alex Trebek” is “female;” “Taylor Swift” is “male;” “Blake Shelton” is “female,” and “Shawn [sic] Connery” is “female.” Only “Jesse Ventura” is listed as “male.”

Slide 14 eliminates all language making any distinctions between “male” and “female” clothing suggestions, under the guise of being “inclusive.” This furthers OSU LGBT activists’ intent to blur lines between biological sexes and dissolve “gender norms.”

Under “Staff/Volunteer Training Topics,” Slide 15 showcases the concept of controlling “Terminology/Language,” by “introductions with pronouns” (to create the impression in children that pronouns do not match biological sex) and the “Genderbread Person” as a teaching aide for 4-H children.

Slide 17 furthers this idea, telling “How to be Inclusive at Camp…and in Other Environments,” urging staffers and volunteers to “introduce yourself with your own personal pronouns,” again promoting the idea that it is “not inclusive” to “assume” pronouns or only use pronouns based on biological sex.

Slide 18 lists “Recognized Need[s],” “Action[s] Implemented,” and “Results.” It is extensive.

Slide 20 lists “Successes” and “Challenges” of implanting “LGBTQ+” ideology into the Ohio 4-H programs:

SUCCESSES
- Unwavering support from administration of Ohio 4-H, OSU Extension, and The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES)
- Financial assistance from the Ohio 4-H Foundation and CFAES Office of Equity and Inclusion
- Positive affirmation from neighboring 4-H programs with multiple states registering representatives
- Recognition from Ohio 4-H staff, volunteers, and youth that LGBTQ+ education is necessary
- Media coverage by marketing and media relations of The Ohio State University
- Protections offered through the University’s nondiscrimination clause

CHALLENGES
- Vocal disapproval by select 4-H parents and volunteers
- Occasional social media responses of negative reaction
• Phone calls and emails to 4-H professionals questioning the purpose of the event
• Families threatening to leave the Ohio 4-H program

Addendum: Oberstadt PowerPoint Analysis – Pg. 3

• Disapproving 4-H clientele calling local legislators to voice their concerns
• Rumors of an organized protest
• Unwillingness of some 4-H professionals to share Summit information in their counties

Slide 21 is entitled “Program Replication.” Chief among the steps is “Inform administration and secure approval with state 4-H leadership, Extension administration, and college-level administration.” “Create a list of talking points (who, what, where, why) that can be easily communicated.” “Share the talking points and contact information of the communications spokesperson with all 4-H professionals.” (Emphasis original).

Slide 24 reiterates and uses the correct title of the “University of California’s 4-H Practices for Inclusion of Individuals of All Gender Identities, Gender Expressions, Sexual Orientations, and Sexes: http://4h.ucanr.edu/files/274340.pdf” as Ohio 4-H’s model.

Conclusion

OSU’s own public statements and numerous documents set the context for interim director of Ohio 4-H, Kirk Bloir’s statement regarding LGBT promotion in the Ohio 4-H program: “If parents or volunteers don’t like that, then we are not the program for them.” This is not just about “gay kids at camp,” as claimed by Bloir.

OSU has proclaimed what it has “done to promote LGBTQ+ inclusion” and what it intends to do. The “LGBTQ+ Summit” PowerPoint claims the full “unwavering support from administration of Ohio 4-H, OSU Extension, and The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences.”

Where this document proudly bears the names and logos of “Ohio State University Extension,” “OSU College of Food, Agriculture, and Environmental Sciences” and the “4-H Clover” on every page; and is drafted by the “Ohio 4-H Program Manager;” and that document says that “Ohio 4-H has Adopted 4-H Guidelines [sic] [California Practices] for Inclusion of Individuals of All Gender Identities, Gender Expressions, Sexual Orientations, and Sexes;” and these “Guidelines/Practices” state boys and girls will be required to sleep, use the restroom, and shower together, based on “gender identity,” without parental permission, then OSU cannot credibly argue that it has not secretly rolled out a new Ohio 4-H policy.

As it currently stands, OSU is intent on enacting radical LGBT revision of social, cultural, and religious norms, and in silencing or driving away parents, employees or volunteers who believe that there are only two sexes, male and female, and that homosexuality and “transgenderism” are inappropriate subjects for impressionable children and have nothing to do with 4-H. OSU must be held accountable.