

Chair Blessing III, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Minority Member Clyde, and the members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee:

My name is Castiel Hoffman and I am submitting this testimony in support of House Bill 160.

As a transgender teenager I have received both confusion and denial from people my age, and although it does not dismiss any sort of discriminatory behavior, these people around me in the community and in school are still children. They are still learning and developing, and have yet to biologically mature. To see LGBTQ individuals face discrimination and hate from adults is absolutely unacceptable.

Oftentimes, the adults who discriminate against LGBTQ individuals are ignorant about both the issue at hand, as well as the LGBTQ community as a whole. However, ignorance is not and should never be an excuse. If adults are able to understand, or at least comply with, the reasoning behind laws for protection regarding age, race and religious affiliation, why should gender identity and sexual orientation be any different?

I am Jewish and I cannot help that my heritage makes me so, in the same way that I cannot help the fact that I am transgender. The problem, however, is that many more people would see a problem with an anti-Semitic remark than they would with a queer slur: Again, two things that I have absolutely no power over. It sickens me to think that in this day and age, in 2018, I could be refused work simply for being the way that I am, despite the fact that it does not cause any harm. Refusing to pass this law will be setting this state back multiple decades. Although they are not identical and only similar, barring this House Bill is unsettlingly reminiscent of times in which it was legal to discriminate against people on the basis of their skin color. I want to live in a society where I am free to be honest, instead of facing persecution, and that is why I strongly urge you to support the Ohio Fairness Act; for both myself and the many other LGBTQ folks across Ohio.

I urge you to pass House Bill 160.