

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

My name is Danielle Hane-Devore and I am writing in support of House Bill 160.

Thank you to Equality Ohio, Ohio Business Competes, ACLU of Ohio and TransOhio for advocating for LGBTQIA protections. Thank you to Rep. Nickie Antonio for proposing this bill last spring. Thank you to all of you that are standing up here today and sharing your own and your family's brave stories in support of employment and housing protections for LGBTQIA Ohioans. My job experience has been mostly positive. In my 20+ years of working in Ohio I have had 5 jobs with 5 different employers in which I feared retaliation or dismissal for simply being honest about who I am. This fear then convinces you that you need to become a different person, compartmentalizing work and home life, being mindful of pronouns - to not mention she or her even in casual banter. You get afraid that you'll slip up with the right pronoun so you avoid socializing as a protective measure. This type of hiding requires lies and requires you to keep up the lies that have been told. It requires you to be fearful in public, after work thinking "will I be seen by a coworker holding my spouse's hand, what if I say something too loudly in a restaurant will that get back to my supervisor, do I trust that person to stand up for me?" Having to hide who you are at work bleeds into your personal life; creating daily panic and fear responses. Looking at this from the standpoint of an employer, wouldn't you want to help your employees succeed at their jobs, foster confidence and want to gain trust from your employees? How does panic and fear affect you as an LGBTQIA worker? Would you be able to maintain a high productivity level with daily stress? As a worker would you feel like this company is fully invested in you and would it erode your sense of trust, would you be fully invested here and supported? Fear and panic are not the values that we want to project within Ohio and beyond. Hundreds of companies all across Ohio have joined Ohio Business Competes to promote HB 160. Because they know that equality makes solid economic sense.

I urge you to consider passing HB160 to strengthen Ohio.