

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 Hayduk, and I am the founder of Rainbow Steps, Ltd. I am writing to urge you to vote yes on HB160 to ensure that LGBTQ Ohioans are able to live, work, and play free from discrimination.

I moved to Ohio with my daughter in 2008. Since then, I have found a career in real estate investing and have done things I never before thought possible. Back in 2012, my daughter came out to me as a lesbian, or queer, and shared with me her fear of gay hate crimes and being exposed to them, as a product of living in Ohio. She goes to an all-girl boarding school in Pennsylvania where she does feel safe. Unfortunately, she is not planning on coming back to Ohio for the summer.

I have started a residential assisted living care home for the LGBTQ elderly. The house is in Hudson, Ohio, and one reason that I believe I have no residents as of yet is my own fear of the reaction of my neighbors and the residents of Hudson. I have also been looking for rentals to start other homes. On three occasions I have gone as far as negotiating the terms of leases, and have been ready to sign, when the rental agency has asked to look at my website and then stopped taking my phone calls, or just said no.

I do a lot of networking to build my business. When I stand up in front of a group to talk about Rainbow Steps, I always look around the room to see how many people's faces light up and how many people cower. You would be surprised by how many folks go out of their way to avoid me as if I had some contagious disease.

What will change for us? The same thing as what will change for LGBTQ people of all ages. The fear will subside, and we will be able to live, equally, as we are.

What will change for me? I will be able to stop worrying about my child, who is now transitioning from female to male, and whether he might be beaten up or mistreated when he walks outside of his school or place of living.

Please, I urge you to vote in support of HB160.