



## OHIO STATE ATHLETICS

Fawcett Center | 2400 Olentangy River Rd. | Columbus, Ohio 43210

January 15, 2018

Chair Blessing III, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Minority Member Clyde, and the members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, my name is Eugene Smith and I am submitting this testimony in support of House Bill 160.

For over 33 years, I have served as Athletic Director at various institutions. And for the past 13 years, I have had the pleasure of serving in such a capacity at The Ohio State University. Having grown up in Cleveland, I feel blessed to have the opportunity to one day conclude my career in a state to which I have so many personal and professional ties.

Over the course of my career, I have learned many lessons. But the one lesson that has come to represent the core of who I am is a fundamental respect for people and the indispensable value of diversity. As a leader, I am passionate about cultivating an environment in which diversity is welcomed and empowered to thrive. In my view, the best organizations thrive on such an approach to diversity.

Regardless of people's interests, personal differences, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or social and economic background, everyone has the potential to bring incredible value to our workplace, and to our society.

Indeed, it's been said before and it's worth repeating now: "Diversity is the one true thing we all have in common, [and] we should celebrate it every day."

It's time that we afford LGBTQ Ohioans the same right to equal protection under the law as everyone else. No one should have to endure discrimination in their place of work, at their home, or as they shop in their communities.

I support HB160 and urge you to pass it into law.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Smith'.

Eugene D. Smith

Senior Vice President & Wolfe Foundation Endowed Athletics Director

# WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: January 15, 2018

Name: Eugene Smith

Are you representing: Yourself  Organization

Organization (If Applicable): The Ohio State University

Position/Title: Senior Vice President and Wolfe Foundation Endowed Athletics Director

Address: 2400 Olentangy River Rd

City: Columbus State: OH Zip: 43210

Best Contact Telephone: 614-292-2477 Email: smith.5407@osu.edu

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes  No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): HB160

Specific Issue: The Ohio Fairness Act

Are you testifying as a: Proponent  Opponent  Interested Party

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes  No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide a brief statement on your position:

*Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.*