

House Bill 160 Written Proponent Testimony
House Government Accountability & Oversight Committee
January 31, 2018

Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde and members of the House Government Accountability & Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of House Bill 160.

As the largest business organization in the Cincinnati metro region, we can say with experience that in today's economy, jobs follow talent. And as an organization that is actively working to grow the talent base in our region, we can say with experience that the best talent, whether from Ohio or anywhere else, wants to be in a community that is inclusive and welcoming to all.

The Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber strongly supports the Ohio Fairness Act (HB 160), which addresses a key business issue when it comes to employment law. By adding sexual orientation and gender identity to the list of protected classes under Ohio Civil Rights law, the state would provide anti-discrimination protections to Ohioans who currently have no such safeguards, particularly when it comes to being hired or fired based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.

The business community continues to lead the efforts to increase workplace diversity. Our region is home to 22 employers who were recently named to the Human Rights Campaign's 2018 Best Places to Work with perfect scores in their Corporate Equality Index.¹ This type of business leadership raises the profile of our area and makes Southwest Ohio a desirable place to live and work. Extending anti-discrimination protections in employment will achieve the same results for the entire state.

Please reach out to me at 513.579.3120 or jkershner@cincinnatiachamber.com if you have any questions. Thank you for your continued commitment to the success of our region.

Sincerely,



Jason Kershner
Vice President, Government Affairs

¹Sources: Human Rights Campaign 2018 Corporate Equality Index https://assets2.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/CEI-2018-FullReport.pdf?_ga=2.97872473.758586059.1513088901-235313034.1512761132
Cincinnati Business Courier <https://www.bizjournals.com/cincinnati/news/2017/11/09/these-are-cincinnati-s-most-and-least-lgbt.html>