

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

My name is Jennifer Greenwood from Piqua, OH and I am writing in support of House Bill 160.

I moved to Ohio several years ago after falling in love with the beautiful scenery, friendly people, and pace of life. I was happy to find a welcoming community and was even happier to begin taking part in my community. I have had the wonderful opportunity to volunteer with nearby animal shelters and join the board of my local Kiwanis organization. For several years now, I have paid taxes, voted in every election, and taken part in cleaning up the rivers and parks of my city. So imagine my surprise when I discovered that, according to the State of Ohio, I am essentially a second class citizen who is unworthy of the same rights as my heterosexual counterparts.

Like many LGBT people, I live in fear every day that my spouse or I could lose a job or be denied rights because of our marriage. In the past, I have been denied housing, forced to leave businesses, have missed out on job opportunities, and spent worrisome nights at a hospital hoping that I wouldn't be asked to leave my ill wife's side.

It is scary to live like this. It is also frustrating to know that I am being treated unfairly because of how God made me. Nothing can be gained by treating some Ohioans differently than others. However, treating all Ohioans equally will be amazing for the economic climate of the state and will bring in new residents who are looking for an inclusive and beautiful state.

I live in constant hope that this inequality will one day be a thing of the past. I dream of being treated equally, and House Bill 160 would make this dream a reality. Please, pass HB 160 so that all Ohioans can be treated equally. All people deserve equal rights and respect. I urge you to pass HB160.