

Chair Blessing III, Vice Chair Reineke, ranking minority member Clyde, and the members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee,

My name is Lisa Phair and I am a business owner in the West Chester area, a volunteer for Cincinnati GLSEN, a supporter of the Cincinnati Children's Hospital transgender clinic, and the mother of three children, ages 17, 9 & 8.

I have lived in Ohio most of my life, growing up catholic in a small rural town in Butler County, attending college at the University of Cincinnati and starting a business in 2003 in West Chester. I support HB160 because less than 3 years ago, my husband and I learned that our middle child is transgender.

Having a sweet, shy little girl, who identified as a boy (in kindergarten) turned our world upside down. At the time, we were ill prepared to help our child and we were completely ignorant about gender identity disorders. But with the help of social workers, therapists and pediatricians, we learned over time how to support him and we started by educating ourselves about gender identity.

Although we have the love and unwavering support of our family, neighbors and friends, our journey has subjected our family to many trials and tribulations. These experiences have opened our eyes to the struggles that so many LGBTQ people face, due to the lack of equal protections under the law.

I support HB160 because I cannot imagine having to tell my 9 year old that he is less than anyone else because he was born with a body that doesn't coincide with his brain.

I support HB160 because I can't imagine the humiliation or embarrassment he would face if he were to be harassed or thrown out of a public place in front of his peers. Or worse, if he were to be prevented from using a public restroom for simply not meeting the expectation of how society feels he should look.

I support HB160 because I can't imagine if my child were to graduate from college, get his dream job and then be "outed" as transgender because the gender marker on his Ohio birth certificate doesn't match his passport or driver's license.

But my support for HB160 extends beyond that of my child's needs, because I have personally seen how anti-discrimination policy and protections can impact economic growth in our state.

Since passing LGBTQ anti-discrimination protections and banning conversion therapy in Cincinnati, I have helped a number of fortune 500 executives move into my area. These relocation transferees have verbalized how their decision to move to Cincinnati was based on the reputation of inclusiveness and the culture of respect, coupled with the anti-discrimination policy of the company that offered them that position.

LGBTQ executives and business owners don't want to live in hiding, invest in a community who doesn't invest in them or build their life in a place where they could lose their job or be harassed in public.

One client that I had, from Houston, TX, worked for Delta Airlines. He mentioned that when he was offered a position that would require a move to Cincinnati, he "jumped" on the opportunity. He said that he was aware of the city's LGBTQ protections and Delta's internal policies and that was a win-win for him.

I support HB160 because I fundamentally believe:

- All Ohio residents and visitors deserve to be treated with dignity and respect and anti-discrimination protections set expectations for behavior
- Ohio business owners should not have to compete with businesses in other states when recruiting and retaining top talent (who may happen to be LGBTQ), just because another state may have LGBTQ protections and Ohio doesn't
- All children should grow up with the understanding that if they work hard they can succeed in Ohio, no matter who they love
- No person should be turned away from a public place for their identity

If my son were sitting here today, you likely wouldn't notice that he is different from any other 9 year old boy. He looks, walks and talks like any other kid his age. He enjoys fishing, baseball, legos and riding his bike. He is well respected at school and accepted by his peers.

My prayer is that by the time he is old enough to understand, our state will have moved forward and advocating for equal rights and protections under the law will be a thing of the past.

My child should be afforded the same opportunity as every other child at his bus stop. He is smart, kind and capable and he should be judged based on his merit and character, not what is in his pants.

Thank you for your consideration. I am willing to answer any questions you may have.