

Chair Blessing III, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Minority Member Clyde, and the members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, my name is Mike Moroski and I support HB160.

In February of 2013, I was terminated from my position as an Assistant Principal in Cincinnati, Ohio because of my support of Marriage Equality. I was given an ultimatum by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati – recant my statements, agree never to sue, or resign. I chose none of the above because my thoughts were on my personal blog page and never directly shared with students.

Nevertheless, I was terminated from a position that I loved.

This was only four short years ago, and today same-sex marriage is recognized as the law of the land across this great nation.

With consideration and passage of House Bill 160, Ohio has the opportunity to join the twenty-two other states in the U.S. that provide statewide nondiscrimination protections for their LGBTQ citizens.

I call upon the members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee to pass HB160 and to protect all employees, renters, and consumers in the State of Ohio regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

America is a diverse and beautiful place. It is your duty to protect that diversity and beauty, and it is your duty to demonstrate to the Ohioans you represent that you will not stand for exclusionary practices in employment, housing, or public accommodations. Indeed, you were elected by a subset of our state's citizenry, but you now represent all of the folks in your districts.

I, too, was recently elected to the Cincinnati Public Schools Board of Education and I know what an amazing and humbling experience public service can be.

To that end, and I am only speaking for myself, I believe that passage of HB160 will send a profound message of inclusion and respect to our young people who are LGBTQ or questioning. As you are likely aware, suicide rates are extremely high for children who identify as part of the LGBTQ community, and when legislators such as yourselves send strong messages of support to them by passing forward-thinking legislation like HB160, it has a significantly positive impact on their mental health and overall wellbeing.

Consideration and passage of this bill is an incredible opportunity for all of you.

Furthermore, nearly three quarters of Ohioans favor employment and housing laws that make it illegal to discriminate based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. 19 cities in Ohio already offer these protections, but it's not consistent – you can literally work in one place, live in another, and lose your rights on your morning commute.

This is why our state leadership needs to step in and make nondiscrimination protections consistent and uniform across Ohio.

As a trustee of the Southwest Ohio Region Workforce Investment Board, it is my duty to allocate scarce public dollars to robust workforce development opportunities in Hamilton County. Not all of the citizens who we serve look the same, but they all deserve to be afforded the same respect and dignity when they enter the workplace. I would love to be able to tell *everyone* at the Ohio Means Jobs Center on Central Parkway that they will be treated equally by their future employer.

But I cannot. At least not yet.

The good news? Of the state's top 98 employers as identified by JobsOhio, over 80 have nondiscrimination policies. Businesses overwhelmingly report that such policies cost them little to nothing.

It is 2017 and it only makes sense that in order to retain top talent, a workplace must be inviting and welcoming and supportive of its workforce. People are no longer willing to settle for "separate, but equal."

America is better than that.

Lastly, let's look at the business case.

The Center for American Progress has estimated the national cost of workplace discrimination is \$64 billion annually. This is the cost for businesses to replace more than 2 million Americans who leave their jobs each year because of workplace discrimination.

I urge you to do the right thing.

Passing HB160 is good for citizens, good for Ohio, and good for business.

Thank you for your time.