

January 19, 2018

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

I am Council Member Nick Komives from Toledo, Ohio, and I am writing to you in support of HB 160. Here in Toledo, we have had protections for all people on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression since 1998, which made Toledo the first city in Ohio to do so. Since implementing the ordinance, I can assure you that many of the typical myths surrounding nondiscrimination protections for all people have simply not come to fruition.

Our Human Rights Ordinance has served as a means to protect people from discrimination in our area. It is, indeed, one of the reasons that people like business owner Dennis Lange keeps his business, Pumpnickel's Deli, in Toledo. Even one of our largest employers, Owens Corning, values the opportunity to embrace employees of all backgrounds and attract a diverse talent pool that has helped them to continue to grow, in fact they are seeing a record year in revenue in 2017.

It is unfortunate that we live in a city where people commute to work in a place where they don't have to fear discrimination, but may return to their homes outside of the city and could face a denial of housing or a mortgage simply because of who they love. All residents of Ohio should be free from discrimination and be treated equally.

I became an elected official in order to help foster fairness and equity. One way is through making Toledo a city that is "open for business." It is my sincere hope that you support HB 160 and help to make an Ohio that is "open for business" for all.

Respectfully,

Nick Komives

Member of Toledo City Council