

## **Testimony of Jeff Milgrom**

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Ohio House of Representatives

Civil Justice Committee

### **House Concurrent Resolution 13**

To encourage equitable and diverse gender representation on the boards and in senior management of Ohio companies and institutions

November 12, 2019

Good afternoon, Chair Hambley, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Civil Justice Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today regarding my support of House Concurrent Resolution #13.

My name is Jeff Milgrom and I am here as a member of the national board of directors for Women for Economic and Leadership Development (WELD). I am also President & CEO of Event Marketing Strategies. Studies have shown that for boards to reap the full benefits of gender diversity, they need to have at least three women on the board. I am proud to be part of an organization that “walks the talk” and follows data-driven strategies: the WELD board consists of 21 diverse business and community leaders and I am one of four men on the board.

Increasing gender diversity on for-profit boards is not just a woman’s issue – it is a business and community-wide issue. Both men and women come to the table with their own implicit biases. Because men dominate the numbers in the boardroom, they are uniquely positioned to advocate for diverse individuals to be considered and selected for boards. It is therefore important for each person to learn how their own implicit bias may inadvertently stall the advancement of

others. Awareness better positions people to advocate for others who may not look like them.

Elevating the importance of improving board gender diversity in the manner of HRC 13 will increase the focus that public and private companies give this important topic.

Since boards seek C-suite talent, building a strong pipeline of women leaders in the executive ranks is a critical component to moving the needle. A McKinsey study found that 50% of men think women are well represented in their workplace already, despite the stats not remotely supporting this assertion. This same study found that 15% of men think it is going to be harder for them to be promoted as the landscape changes and women advance further. The reality is that board members are more willing to open doors to people who are just like them. If the current crop of executives is predominately white and male, McKinsey asserts that women are unlikely to get many seats at the table unless the promotion process changes.

HRC 13 will cause companies to be more intentional in addressing diversity in their executive ranks and on their boards through well-articulated strategies backed up by effective action.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HCR 13. I am happy to answer any questions.