



DIVERSITY CHAMBER OF CENTRAL OHIO

January 16, 2020

DIVERSITY CHAMBER OF CENTRAL OHIO TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB369

Chair Hambley, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Member Brown, and the members of the House Civil Justice Committee, my name is Allison Harrison, here on behalf of the Diversity Chamber of Central Ohio, a Chamber of Commerce supporting the LGBT business community in Central Ohio and I am submitting this testimony in support of HB369, the Ohio Fairness Act. As I stand here today, I represent a diverse group of small business owners who will be directly affected by HB369.

The Diversity Chamber is an affiliate of the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC). In a 2016 study, NGLCC found that LGBT businesses contribute over \$1.7 Trillion to the US economy, with the average LGBT owned business being formed over 12 years ago. Ohio is in the top half of the country for most certified LGBT owned businesses. Can you imagine how many more businesses could be started or continued if the barriers of discrimination could be removed?

HB369 would provide crucial protections to our members personally and for their businesses. HB369 would remove discrimination for subcontracting work from private companies and in Ohio government contracts; allowing our members to apply without apprehension. HB369 allows our business owners access to government services without the possibility of discrimination. HB369 would allow our business owners to buy, finance, and enter into lease agreements for commercial space without discrimination. It allows business owners the peace of mind that when they retire, no retirement home in the state can turn them away just because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. HB369 allows our members to have access to health insurance for themselves and their employees without the possibility for discrimination.

In short, HB369 can and will help small business grow in Ohio. By passing HB369, you would remove many of the barriers, fears, and speed bumps in the way of Ohio's LGBT business community. This would create an environment where current businesses succeed, new businesses are created, and entrepreneurs choose Ohio as the location to start their business. By passing HB369, you would allow Ohio businesses to flourish, increase employment, and increase tax revenue.



560 East Town Street
Columbus, OH 43215



DiversityColumbus.org
info@DiversityColumbus.org