

Chair Hambley, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Member Brown, and the members of the House Civil Justice Committee, my name is Amanda Vincent, and I am a graduate student studying clinical psychology at Xavier University. I am submitting this testimony in support of House Bill 369, the Ohio Fairness Act.

Like three-quarters of Ohioans, I favor employment and housing laws that make it illegal to discriminate based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Simply put, I believe that all Ohioans should be treated equally and that laws should protect all Ohioans from unjustly being fired from their jobs based on a part of their identity. In addition, allowing discrimination to persist hurts businesses in Ohio. Businesses have to pay to replace employees who leave their jobs due to discrimination. In addition, top corporations and employees are reluctant to move to Ohio without laws that protect employees.

I understand that there are many concerns about how this law may impact bathroom laws in Ohio. It is important to note that harassment in restrooms is illegal in Ohio and that this will not change with the passage of this bill. Everyone should be able to expect privacy in restrooms, and this bill will not change that. In the 250+ cities that have adopted similar laws, there has not been an increase in public safety issues. Above all, this bill ensures that LGBTQ individuals are protected from discrimination. No one should be turned away from a job, a business, or a restaurant due to who they love or to the gender that they identify. Ohio is behind other states, who already have similar laws in place. All Ohioans deserve to be treated fairly, and LGBT Ohioans deserve to be legally protected from discrimination.

Please vote yes on House Bill 369, the Ohio Fairness Act. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Amanda Vincent