

Chair Hambley, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Member Brown, and the members of the House Civil Justice Committee, my name is Courtney Froh and I am submitting this testimony in support of House Bill 369, the Ohio Fairness Act.

I relocated from California some years ago to settle in Columbus after falling in love with the city. Part of the appeal to living here is the huge LGBTQ population. Being a queer person as well, Columbus has been more than welcoming. However, I have found that the protections for our community that are provided by Columbus are not statewide. It puts each person in jeopardy of losing their jobs if they are open about being LGBTQ or otherwise suspected of being from the community.

This puts me and others at risk of not only losing employment but losing future employment as well. We all deserve to be protected from discrimination and termination. I am personally very lucky to have employment with an accepting and welcoming establishment. But so many do not. In the past I have been very reserved about opening up about being queer for fear of retaliation. I am personally invested in passing this bill because I am a queer person, and I want everyone to be protected.

Working with young LGBTQ persons daily, I can see how fearful they are about the future. Please give them a voice and space to continue feeling safe in the workplace. Protecting LGBTQ persons from discrimination is not only the right thing to do, it is essential for attracting and retaining hardworking, creative individuals to businesses. We all work very hard to provide for ourselves and our families. Please consider what termination would cost an LGBTQ person who has a family behind that paycheck. If they lose their job, they lose food for their family. They lose benefits for themselves and their family. By leaving us vulnerable, you strip us of rights in employment, health, safety and security. I implore you to pass this Fairness Act to secure a future for myself and those in my community. Please support equality and advocate for our community by passing this bill.

I urge you to pass House Bill 369, the Ohio Fairness Act. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Courtney Froh