

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

I have had several people in my life who have been negatively impacted by the stigma surrounding LGBT+ people. Coming from the small town of Jackson, Ohio, most of our LGBT population stays in the closet until they can leave the town, usually for college. Many of my friends have confided their sexuality to me in private but remain in the closet in fear of rejection from their families and peers. One of my friends identifies as bisexual, and she greatly fears coming out to her religious family because she fears she will be kicked out of her house or disowned. Even having moved out for college, she cannot come out because she is financially dependent on her family. She has also expressed fear that she may never find employment as a nurse without hiding her sexuality from her employers.

Due to the current structure of our laws, some of the kindest, hardest working, and genuinely good people fear whether or not they will be able to pursue work and support themselves. In addition, allowing discrimination to run rampant throughout our state only works to damage Ohio as a whole.

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

Courtney Polcyn