

January 27, 2020

Ohio House Civil Justice Committee
The Ohio Statehouse
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Hambley, Vice Chairman Patton, Ranking Member Brown and the Ohio House of Representatives Civil Justice Committee:

The Columbus Partnership offers our sincere support of the Ohio Fairness Act, House Bill 369, which enacts the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression in the State of Ohio.

The Columbus Partnership is a non-profit, membership-based leadership organization of 75 chairpersons, chief executive officers, and senior executives from the region's leading businesses and institutions. Our members include 15 Fortune 1000 CEOs, as well as the leaders of the nation's largest university and world's largest research and development organization.

The Partnership's goal is to provide a long-term vision for achieving greater economic prosperity and has positioned Columbus to be one of the strongest environments to attract businesses and investment in the world. As our organization and economic development mission have evolved, so has our emphasis on the value of inclusivity. Economic development efforts in Ohio are directly benefited by our collective commitment to reduce barriers to success and improve the well-being of every person in every corner of our state. House Bill 369 is intentional, value-based legislation that will benefit marginalized people in our communities and encourage a prosperous economic climate for years to come.

The Ohio Fairness Act is supported by Ohio Business Competes, an organization which advocates for non-discrimination policies to attract top talent to the state. Dozens of our member companies have joined the Ohio Business Competes coalition in their advocacy efforts. The State of Ohio should follow the lead of its business community and join the 22 other states that have enacted similar laws to ensure that we stay competitive on a global stage. This legislation will expand our State's ability to attract the best and brightest, increase workplace diversity, and ultimately grow Ohio's economy. The legislation will also serve as another tool for Ohio to use as we compete on a national level for job growth and economic development projects as forward-thinking businesses seek to invest in Ohio.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony in support of the Ohio Fairness Act, House Bill 369. Our diverse business, academic, and research community will benefit from your committee's efforts to continue to showcase Ohio as a leader in economic development and creating prosperity for all.

Very truly yours,



Alex R. Fischer
President and CEO

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