

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

Throughout my collegiate career, I have been surrounded by beautiful, talented, and incredible queer creatives and people. Through my involvement in the art program at Ohio State, through the college's comedy program, and through a myriad of other avenues at school, I have worked with some fantastic queer folks who have pushed me to be a more aware, loving, and compassionate human being. Each and every one of these people, and queer people all throughout Ohio, deserve rights through the Ohio Fairness Act.

As a college student at a large public university, my fellow students and I are very lucky to benefit from the support and acceptance of queer people and communities at our university. I believe that the accepting communities throughout Ohio State will create a stronger Columbus and foster global citizens who will spread this acceptance, talent, and steadfastness throughout the state and beyond. Yet, we are only a small pocket of a much larger city, within a populous state, and a huge, powerful country; our city, our state, and our country is full of queer folks who, sadly, do not benefit from the support of our supportive university.

I am writing to you today in support of the Ohio Fairness Act because I believe that every queer person in Ohio deserves to trust that their employers, family members, fellow citizens, and State accept them as an equal human being worthy of rights and respect. I am proud to be from Ohio, and I would be an ever-prouder Ohioan if our state respected the lives of queer folks throughout the state.

As a midwestern state composed of a beautiful mix of urban, suburban, rural, and Appalachian communities, we have the amazing opportunity to welcome and support people of all identities. By being a proudly anti-discriminatory state, we will welcome in even more talented queer folks to further enrich and build our great state. By then respecting each and every one of these people as humans worthy of rights, happiness, work, and growth, our state will become more open and available to more people. With the passing of HB 369, our state will attract and retain even more talented and dedicated queer folks and foster a strong, accepting economy and community. As Ohio, we must set a precedent for other states, especially ones with similar political alignments. As a creative person constantly learning and growing thanks to the queer people in my community, I believe so strongly in the rights and acceptance of queer people in Ohio. Passing the HB 369, the Ohio Fairness Act, will support LBGTQ+ people throughout Ohio and foster a community within our state that allows them to grow within our state and enrich our communities with long-lasting benefits and change. Passing HB 369 is a necessary move in making Ohio a more accepting and strong state full of talent and pride.

Please vote yes on House Bill 369, the Ohio Fairness Act.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Genevieve Wagner