

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

I care about equality because I believe that all people should be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. I want to work toward a future where people treat each other as they hope to be treated. The idea that my friends, family, and community could be discriminated against for who they love or how they chose to express is mind-boggling. The LGBTQ+ community isn't asking for special treatment. They are asking to be recognized as humans, with all of the rights and protections of every American citizen.

I am not alone in my views. Nearly three-quarters of Ohioans favor housing and employment laws that make discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression illegal. Over two dozen localities in Ohio offer their own version of protections. It is not only a moral necessity. It's a politically and economically sound policy. Policies like the Ohio Fairness Act could help stimulate the economy, as legal protections make it possible for a more diverse group of workers and entrepreneurs to bring a wide range of skills and expertise to the workforce. Additionally, workplace discrimination costs the workplace \$64 billion annually as more than 2 million Americans leave their jobs due to workplace harassment.

Protecting people from discrimination based on gender identity or expression or sexual orientation isn't about special status. It's about allowing hard-working people to be secure in their homes and businesses.

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

Hannah Wagner