

Scott D. Wiley, President & CEO  
Proponent Testimony - HB 369  
On behalf of The Ohio Society of CPAs  
Ohio House Civil Justice Committee

Chair Hambley, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Member Brown and members of the Committee, I'm pleased to speak in support of HB 369 on behalf of The Ohio Society of CPAs' 27,000 CPA, affiliate and student members. This bill seeks to expand Ohio's civil rights laws to provide legal protections for gender identity or expression, and sexual orientation.

From the perspective of OSCPA, H.B 369 is about helping to build a strong workforce. One of the biggest challenges I hear from CPAs in all corners of this great state is the ability to find and retain qualified workers. We believe that achieving LGBTQ-inclusive nondiscrimination policies at the state level will enable Ohio to better attract and retain individuals from the widest possible talent pool.

In fact, 80% of the respondents in a 2017 Deloitte study on diversity and inclusion said that inclusion is an important factor in choosing an employer. 72% of participants in the study said they would leave an organization for one they believe is more inclusive.<sup>1</sup>

The reality is that America's demographics are shifting, and many organizations are elevating conversations and policies around diversity and inclusion. OhioBusinessCompetes, a coalition of business entities committed to achieving an inclusive work climate to help Ohio's economy, has hundreds of members – including OSCPA and many of the businesses owned by or employing our members. In addition, over 20 Ohio municipalities have protection policies in place; for businesses operating in multiple jurisdictions, having varying requirements in place from city to city can be a significant challenge. Passage of H.B. 369 will not only give these Ohio employers certainty by having one law to follow, it will enable Ohio to better compete with the over 20 states that have already adopted similar laws.

OSCPA represents accounting and business leaders who are driving Ohio's economy in communities throughout the state. Adding our support to this legislation is one way we can work to ensure Ohio is positioned to compete nationally and internationally for the best and brightest workers and business partners, and to make our state a friendlier place to live and work.

I appreciate your attention to this issue and encourage your support of this legislation. I would be happy to answer any questions.

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<sup>1</sup> Deloitte, "Seventy-Two Percent of Working Americans Surveyed Would or May Consider Leaving an Organization for One They Think is More Inclusive, Deloitte Poll Finds."