

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

I am a physician who has been providing care to the LGBTQ community in the greater Cleveland area for over a decade, and I have seen first hand the impact of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity on health. LGBTQ Ohioans currently face discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations. The impact of this discrimination affects the health and daily lives of many of the patients I see and care for.

In my experience, I have met LGBTQ patients who have traveled across the state because they experienced rejection and refusal of care in their home communities. Some have suffered ridicule and taunting at the hands of their physicians and staff. Others report experiencing violence and mistreatment at the hands of their caregivers, including settings like the emergency department.

Nationally, more than one-third (33%) of transgender people reported having at least one negative experience in health care related to being transgender. In the 2015 National Transgender Survey, conducted by the National Center for Transgender Equality, thirty-nine percent (39%) of respondents reported serious psychological distress and seven percent (7%) of respondents have attempted suicide in the past year. From my clinical experience, many of these negative outcomes are linked to patients' despair from systemic rejection and discrimination.

LGBTQ youth fare little better despite changing national attitudes toward sexuality. The 2017 GLSEN National School Climate Survey demonstrated that 59.5% of LGBTQ students felt unsafe in schools due to their sexual orientation and 44.6% due to their gender identity. More than 90% of students in the survey reported experiencing anti-LGBTQ remarks at school. Over 87% of students reported experiencing harassment and assault at school. In my practice, I saw many LGBTQ youth who were home-schooled due to fears of bullying and harm from students and teachers. Many experienced depression and anxiety related to their negative experiences in their communities.

I urge you to pass House Bill 369, the Ohio Fairness Act. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Henry Ng, MD, MPH