



Chair Hambly, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Member Brown and members of the House Civil Justice Committee,

My name is Dr. Jason McCray and I am submitting this testimony in support of House Bill 369, The Ohio Fairness Act. As the Chief Science Officer at The Center for Balanced Living, a free-standing, non-profit mental health treatment facility specializing in eating disorders in Columbus, I see the impact of institutional discrimination every day in the lives of the Ohioans we serve.

There is considerable scientific evidence that facing discrimination contributes to stress and burden which contributes to exacerbating existing symptoms of mental health struggles and may cause them in people who otherwise might not have faced mental illness. One of the founding precepts of our country is that all people are created equal and we have come to believe that means that all must be treated equally under the law. The multitude of stressors permitted by legal discrimination against LGBTQ+ Ohioans flies in the face of the founding principles of our nation and defies any rational explanation outside of those based in scripture.

The continued legal discrimination against nearly 400,000 Ohioans (roughly the same number of people who live in Cleveland) adds to the cost of healthcare and mental healthcare while creating an inhospitable climate for innovative and LGBTQ+ friendly businesses. The pain, anxiety, and unease caused by knowing that housing, employment and access to public accommodations robs countless Ohioans of peace of mind while draining productivity from their workplace, community, and creative pursuits. I implore you to support the passage of HB369 so that Ohioans can count on being judged on the basis of our merits and accomplishments rather than outdated biases and arbitrary prejudices. Thank you very much for your consideration and deliberation.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jason McCray, Ph.D.', is written over a faint, larger version of the same signature.

11/11/19

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