

Chair Hambley, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Minority Member Brown, and the members of the House Civil Justice Committee, The Lima/Allen County Chamber of Commerce is a leading business advocate and represent over 900 companies that do business in the Lima/Allen County Region. Our mission is to serve represent and enhance business growth and success.

Our businesses need the best and brightest talent from all walks of life to feel welcome and to call Ohio home. Ensuring that Ohio's future business competitiveness is good for all of Ohio and enhances respect for all employers and employees is key. These protections will further show that Ohio is a hospitable and welcoming place to live, work, and start a business.

In advancing Ohio's business climate, the Lima Allen County Chamber agrees with the Ohio Chamber of Commerce that we need to recognize the value and power of diversity. We believe that employees deserve robust protections from discrimination and that discrimination of any type has no place in the workplace. Everyone deserves the right to do their job without fear of being discriminated against and every person, regardless of their race, color, religion, sex, military status, national origin, disability, age, ancestry, sexual orientation, or gender identity, deserves equal opportunity and equal protection under the law.

In conclusion, adding protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity will help businesses attract the best and brightest talent from all walks of life and ensure that Ohio is viewed as a welcome and hospitable place to do business. It will also provide a statewide standard where there has not previously been one eliminating the need for a patchwork of local labor laws, easing the compliance burdens on businesses. The Lima/Allen County Chamber of Commerce urges support for HB369 to further advance Ohio's image as an open and welcome place to work and do business.