



January 24, 2020

**RE: TESTIMONY FOR HOUSE BILL 369**

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

Thank you for taking the time to hear testimony today in support of House Bill 369. My name is Katie Veasey Gillette, and I am writing on behalf of City Architecture. Our company, based out of Cleveland, is a small, collaborative architecture and urban design firm. We focus on creating opportunities and environments that cause positive impacts in the communities we serve. Many of our projects are located in urban and diverse neighborhoods, and effect people of all backgrounds, from poor to rich, black to white, and more.

The work that we do and the people that we serve through our work is indescribably important. It's crucial that our company is outfitted with the best, brightest, and most driven people. If we were to look at people's skin colors, ethnic backgrounds, gender, or sexual orientation when working together or hiring, we would be doing ourselves and our clients a disservice. Simply stated, we would miss out on some of the most creative and compassionate people. Our team is extremely driven, both professionally and personally, and we base much of our work on "why" we practice our craft – to serve our communities by fighting for equity. Sexual orientation, race, economic status or any other social indicator have nothing to do with a person's ability to love why they do great work.

Our company of 19 full-time employees might be the most diverse group of people you've ever seen – young, old, white, black, men, women, gay, straight. We cover the spectrum, and it makes us all better for it. Our worldview is expanded, we have intelligent conversations, and we have great relationships, borne out of respect, with our clients and the communities in which we serve because of our varied perspectives.

When I read the statistic that more than 2 million Americans leave their jobs because of workplace discrimination, I was appalled, disappointed, and frankly embarrassed. It is a human right to be treated with dignity and respect, and it is sad to know that in 2018, this is not common practice.

If we want our economy in Ohio to be competitive and for employers to recruit the best talent, Ohio needs inclusive nondiscrimination laws.

Thank you all for your time, and please know that I am available to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Katie V. Gillette'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent 'K' and 'G'.

Katie Veasey Gillette  
Architect