

Chairman Hambley, Vice Chairman Patton, Ranking Member Brown, and the members of the House Civil Justice Committee, I, Kelley Griesmer, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of House Bill 369 on behalf of The Women's Fund of Central Ohio.

The Women's Fund of Central Ohio and its network of thousands of change makers across central Ohio (including the counties of Franklin, Delaware, Fairfield, Licking, Madison, Pickaway and Union) envision a future where equality and equity are the norm in life and work. We recognize that positive social change will come about only when barriers of gender, class, ethnicity, race, educational background, sexual orientation, gender identity, economic status, and faith traditions are overcome.

Our research¹ and experience have shown that societal biases around gender, race, and other intersectional identities are pervasive and, when left unaddressed in our institutions, policies, and businesses, those biases materially and negatively impact economic opportunities and growth for all. Our most recent report examining the gender and racial wealth gap in central Ohio found that, while LGBTQ+ women were more likely to work full-time, they were less likely to have access to wealth-building tools such as employer-provided retirement plans and paid leave². Limiting the economic viability of these hardworking individuals due to societal biases unnecessarily injures both these individuals and the community that would otherwise be strengthened by their economic success.

The Ohio Fairness Act (HB 369) promotes critical systemic-level change that builds upon the foundation of antidiscrimination in Ohio's existing civil rights statute and further safeguards and improves the opportunities of all people in our community to thrive, particularly when it comes to being hired or fired based on their sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

The Women's Fund of Central Ohio strongly supports and urges you to pass the Ohio Fairness Act (HB 369). Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Kelley Griesmer
President and CEO
The Women's Fund of Central Ohio

¹ The Pervasive Power of Gender Norms, 2016, <http://www.womensfundcentralohio.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Gender-Norms-Final-Full-Report-web.pdf>

² Assets for Equity, 2019, <http://www.womensfundcentralohio.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/2019-Gender-Racial-Wealth-Gap-Report.pdf>