

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

I support LGBTQ equality because I am a trans guy, I am in a same-sex relationship, my partner is trans, and I've been harassed in public for who I am. I've seen the studies showing that LGBTQ inclusion tends to improve the economic outlook for an area like the State of Ohio, and I'm an educator and have helped LGBTQ students navigate discrimination and family estrangement due to prejudice and administrative incompetence from university officials.

My family and I have been harassed because of my LGBTQ identity. While spending the day with our son in downtown Kent, my partner and I were approached by a gentleman who asked about where our son's mother was. After replying that he is me and my partner's son, the man appeared livid and began sputtering about how two men can't have a kid, and that two men can't just "poop out" a kid, and that our family arrangement was unnatural.

He continued insulting me, my partner, and our child, and eventually flung a bottle at us. Our son was incredibly upset and we quickly left the area. Fortunately, no one was physically hurt.

With the hostility that LGBTQ Ohioans experience on a regular basis, we should not also be left vulnerable to discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations.

I urge you to pass House Bill 369, the Ohio Fairness Act.

Thank you for your time and consideration.