

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

Ohio has been my home for my entire life. Everything that I know, everything that I've learned, everything that I am, is irrevocably tied to this state. My home can be beautiful and wonderful, but it also contains qualities that are the antithesis of those things and merely serves to permeate hate.

Although I love Ohio, the fact that this state allows LGBTQ individuals to be discriminated against based on their sexual orientation or gender identity or expression is something that I do not find beautiful or wonderful. The discrimination that Ohio still deems acceptable for its citizens is unfair. But it is more than just unfair. It sends a message to its residents that some are unacceptable and some do not deserve to feel safe in the place that they call home. I do not find LGBTQ people unacceptable, I find laws that discriminate against them unacceptable.

I am graduating from The Ohio State University at the end of the summer. I plan on attaining my law degree and practicing within the bounds of the state I have called home for 19 years. I plan on using my law degree to give back to the people who have given me everything. I have those grand plans, those grand dreams, and I am also queer. That simple fact complicates my plans. It is difficult to reconcile the fact that I choose to serve a state that does not protect me. It is difficult to consider the reality that depending on where I am working, I can be expelled from a job based on my identity. It is difficult to know that those in my community can be discriminated against and my law degree will do nothing to help them.

Ohio is my home. I plan to stay and fight to make it a more beautiful and wonderful place for everyone to live. So, I strongly urge you to pass House Bill 369, the Ohio Fairness Act. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions that you may have.