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Mr. Stephen D. Hambley, Chair
Mr. Thomas F. Patton, Vice Chair
Mr. Richard D. Brown, Ranking Member
House Civil Justice Committee
The Ohio House of Representatives
77 S. High Street
11th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Leaders of and Members of the House Civil Justice Committee:

My name is Margaret W. Wong. I am Senior and Managing Partner of the immigration law firm, Margaret W. Wong and Associates, LLC, headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, with offices in Columbus, Ohio, and seven other cities across the USA. I respectfully submit this testimony in support of House Bill 369, the Ohio Fairness Act.

I support the Ohio Fairness Act because all Ohioans deserve fair treatment and equal opportunity under the law. No one should be fired from their job, denied housing, or refused a sale simply because of who they are or who they love. LGBTQ people should be able to work hard, provide for their families, contribute to their communities, and engage fully in society without fear of discrimination. The Ohio Fairness Act is common-sense policy based on the principles of equality, freedom, and dignity.

Margaret W. Wong & Associates, LLC, is dedicated to providing high quality, efficient, and prompt services to both companies and individuals in immigration to the United States. We assist our clients obtain all types of visas and legal actions, including work visas, green cards (permanent residency), J-1 waivers, labor certifications, deportation cases, asylum cases, and criminal defense and immigration appeals litigation.

The Ohio Fairness Act is not only the right thing to do — it's also good for business. In order for Ohio to attract and retain the best business talent, we need to adopt policies that are inclusive of everyone — including LGBTQ people. Furthermore, in a state where young people are increasingly leaving to take their skills, talents, and education elsewhere, we need to double down on our efforts to implement attractive policies like LGBTQ-inclusive nondiscrimination protections to encourage them to stay.

Many businesses already know the crucial importance of basic nondiscrimination protections. Margaret W. Wong & Associates is proud to be one of the over 800 businesses that have joined Ohio Business Competes, the statewide coalition of businesses in support of LGBTQ nondiscrimination protections. However, even a law firm like ours cannot protect their employees in all areas of law. It's up to Ohio's lawmakers to extend comprehensive nondiscrimination protections to the LGBTQ community in all areas of life - employment, housing and public accommodations.

Please vote yes on House Bill 369, the Ohio Fairness Act.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Margaret W. Wong'.

Margaret W. Wong, Esq.
Senior and Managing Partner

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Every immigrant tells a story. Each Green Card is a success.
Practice Focus: Immigration, Visas, U.S. Citizenship