

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

My name is Rebecca Snyder. I am a proud suburban Christian mother of two kind, beautiful, and vibrant young adults. Both of my children, as they move toward the edge of the nest my husband have created for them, face their own challenges. My daughter Stephanie is on the autism spectrum and works hard nearly every day at a pet supply store, saving much of each paycheck toward her future living expenses. My son Alistair will graduate high school at the end of this academic year, and looks forward to moving out of our home and beginning college. Both of my children face challenges in terms of gaining and maintaining employment and housing.

Neither chose these challenges. My daughter's barriers come from her developmental disability. My son's come simply because he was born female. Ohio law protects my daughter from discrimination from employers or landlords who believe that she shouldn't work for them or live in their housing because she is autistic. But as my son begins to look at apartments and plans his career path, he has no such assurance. Despite being a bright, likable, clean and upright young man with impeccable credit and legal backgrounds, he can be denied housing simply because of the difference between his genetics and his gender. Assuming he finds housing, works through his school of choice, and earns his degree, he still faces the possibility that prospective employers might legally choose not to hire him, regardless of his grades or his interview skills or his many years of volunteer work. They might, completely legally, choose not to hire him simply because he is transgender.

House Bill 369 would not assure either of my children an easy life, but it would grant my son the same essential legal protections against discrimination that my daughter and other Ohioans with other challenges enjoy. I ask you to please consider my family as you decide on this very important bill. I don't blame you if you find it hard to put yourselves in my childrens' shoes. But please take a moment and try to imagine yourself in mine. Imagine guiding your two young adult children as they search apartment listings for the first time. Imagine having to warn one of them that they might not be permitted to live in a particular place because of a personal condition over which they have absolutely no control. If you can imagine that, then maybe you can understand why I find myself fighting for my kid's legal rights today.

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

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Rebecca Snyder