

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

When my wife and I first met, we were both living in Brooklyn, New York. I grew up in San Jose, California, she grew up in North Olmsted, Ohio, and we both moved to New York City after college. After we got married, my wife decided that she wanted to change careers – she wanted to go back to school to earn an M.D. and become a physician. In 2015, she applied to medical school and was accepted into Case Western, so we decided to move to Cleveland. My mother-in-law would be around to help with the kids and after all those years living in little apartments, we were very pleased at the prospect of having a real garden.

Our kids are now ages 7, 5, and 3. My wife will graduate from Case with her M.D. this spring, which means that in a few weeks, my wife and I must decide where she would like to do her residency. The question is straightforward: should we stay in Ohio, or should we move back to New York?

One of our children is trans. She announced to us, almost as soon as she could speak, that she was not a boy but a girl. It has been no trivial thing to adjust--her grandparents still mix her pronouns up, neither my wife nor I grew up around any openly trans kids--but now the world knows our daughter as nothing else than a girl.

Now. Will she be saying the same things in one year, in two years, in twenty years? Will she one day ask to be called 'he,' and suddenly stop wearing dresses and demand a buzz cut? We don't know, and we can't know. But I do know that one year from now, two years from now, and even twenty years from now, I will be the father of an LGBT kid.

So, the question is, would I want that kid to grow up in Ohio? Or in New York?

I will tell you that, as of today, the question requires no thought at all. Because I won't bring my daughter up in a state where she can be discriminated against legally. She loves diggers, cranes, and anything in construction. So, let's say, at age eighteen she wants to get a summer job putting roofs on houses. In Ohio, it would be perfectly legal for her boss to fire her. She loves to swim. If, at age sixteen, she wants to get a summer job as a lifeguard, it would be perfectly legal here in Ohio for her potential employer to refuse to hire her, because they don't like the idea of employing a trans lifeguard.

Would a good father let his kid grow up in a state where she won't be able to reach her full potential? Where, in fact, she might not be able to find work?

Would a good father let his other kids grow up in a state where they see their sibling subjected to legal discrimination?

Maybe Ohio doesn't want our family here. But it seems like a shame. My wife was born here, she will earn her M.D. here. I am a member of the bar here. I love my little garden here. But in a few weeks, we have to decide whether to move away. And given the lack of LGBT

nondiscrimination protections in Ohio, and given that those protections are extended to LGBT folks in New York, why would we choose to stay?

I urge you to pass HB369, the Ohio Fairness Act.

Respectfully submitted:

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