

House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee
House Bill 160
January 30, 2018

Good Morning Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee. Thank you for allowing me to submit proponent testimony for House Bill 160. As you know, this bill would create the Ohio Fairness Act, providing protections to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. I was compelled to show support for this legislation to ensure all Ohioans are treated equally and are provided the same opportunity to succeed.

The fact that it is still legal in our state to discriminate against anyone shows just how much work we still have ahead of us. In 2018, when LGBTQ Americans are free to marry the person they love and build a life with that person, how can we justify a legal system that still allows someone to deny those same Ohioans a job or a home?

We cannot claim to be providing all Ohioans a fair shot at success when state-sanctioned discrimination still exists in our own state. We cannot hope to attract the most talented and qualified individuals to Ohio when such discrimination is still permissible. And we cannot hope that our own children will stay close to home and help move Ohio forward when we will not move forward ourselves.

I ask that you help Ohio take this simple but critical step forward by passing this bill out of committee and moving it to the floor for a full vote. Too many Ohioans have waited far too long for this day. We shouldn't make them wait another minute. Thank you for your time and your consideration.