

Chair Blessing III, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Minority Member Clyde, and the members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, my name is Joe Matuszewski and I am a father, a husband, and a lifelong Ohioan.

I am a partner with Ernst & Young LLP (EY), a global leader in assurance, tax, transaction and advisory services, and am based in the Cleveland office. I earned my Master of Business Administration from Baldwin Wallace University and I am a Certified Public Accountant in the State of Ohio. My career has been focused on providing assurance services to our clients and I have extensive experience leading globally integrated audits and frequently conduct business abroad with our clients and affiliates in Europe and Asia. In addition to my responsibilities with EY, I also serve on the Boards of Directors of Equality Ohio Education Fund and the Plexus Education Foundation, two organizations that advocate and educate to achieve fair treatment and equal opportunity for all Ohioans regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

I am truly passionate about my work. I am proud to represent myself, my team and EY while conducting business around the world. This is due in no small part to the inclusive policies and vibrant culture that EY prides itself in cultivating and promoting. At EY, we believe in the power of diversity and the value of unique viewpoints. We also believe it is essential to afford each of our employees the respect and dignity they deserve to thrive as individuals and to produce their best work. These organizational values are fully aligned with my personal values. And they have enabled me to bring my complete and authentic self to work each day.

My other tremendous passion, and truly my greatest source of love and joy, is my family. My daughter, Addyson, and my husband, Nathan, mean more to me than anything in the world. I feel incredibly fortunate to have had the opportunity to build a rich, meaningful life here in Ohio with my family. And I continue to struggle to fully express the depth of my gratitude for having been given the chance to join with my partner in the institution of marriage. Even today, I don't think I can adequately express the overwhelming significance of having both my and Nathan's names listed as fathers on Addyson's birth certificate. The right to marry has impacted my family in such a profound way. And I know that House Bill 160 would have just as much of an impact – if not more – on the safety and security of my daughter, my husband and myself.

My family and I reside in Medina, and although my husband and I have been incredibly fortunate to have not been subjected to harassment or discrimination on the basis of our sexual orientation, it pains me to know that in my city, I could be legally refused service or denied housing simply for being gay. Crucially, this not only negatively impacts Nathan and me, but could also jeopardize the welfare and happiness of our daughter. I don't quite know how I'm going to explain to my daughter that her parents don't have equal protection under the law. But I'm hoping I won't have to.

Growing up here in Ohio and later earning my degree at Baldwin Wallace University, I came to realize that I had two main goals for my life. I knew I wanted a successful, lucrative, challenging and fulfilling career. But I also knew that I wanted a family. At the time, I sincerely believed that because I am gay, I would have to choose between one goal and the other. I was convinced that because of my sexual orientation, the two were mutually exclusive and that one could only be made reality in the absence of the other.

As time passed and I had the good fortune to land an incredible career opportunity with EY and, a few years later, meet my future husband, I came to realize that it truly was possible to achieve both of these goals. However, I must strongly emphasize that the unity of these two dreams – of creating both a family and a robust career – were only made possible by EY's strong commitment to inclusion, respect, compassion and fairness. Had it not been for the longstanding existence of nondiscrimination policies and the culture of inclusion that followed in their wake, I would not be able to thrive in my career as I do today.

Right now, across the State of Ohio, there are LGBTQ men and women just like me who have not been given the same opportunity to work for an organization that ensures their fair and decent treatment. And with only 19 cities in Ohio guaranteeing legal protections on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, these folks have nowhere to turn. They have no legal recourse. They are forced to accept the reality that they can be fired at any time for no reason other than being who they are.

House Bill 160 is the solution to this problem. It is the remedy that so many LGBTQ Ohioans need in order to be safe, secure and protected in their communities. Organizations such as EY already know how important these protections can be for the productivity and wellbeing of their workforce. They also know how crucial it is to attract and retain the most talented and hardworking employees. HB160 will undoubtedly make Ohio a more appealing place to both work and live.

I want to thank the committee for considering this important piece of legislation. If passed, I believe it will do a great deal of good for the State of Ohio.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.