

Chair Blessing III, Vice Chair Reineke, ranking minority member Clyde, and the members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee,

Dr. Mark Foran
OhioHealth

I strongly support the legislation, HB 160, being considered.

I was born and raised in Ohio, spending the first twenty-two years of my life in the state. I grew up in rural Licking County to parents who have lived their entire lives in Ohio. I attended Kenyon College, before going to Johns Hopkins for my medical degree and Harvard University for my graduate medical education in emergency medicine and a Master of Public Health degree.

I now live in Franklin County, and serve as a physician leader at OhioHealth in the role of Senior Medical Director for Ambulatory Care, where I work to make healthcare more simple, accessible, and affordable for the communities we serve.

Improvements in treatment of LGBTQ people, including the national legalization of same-sex marriage contributed to my decision to move back to Ohio from New York three years ago. The overall climate around treatment of LGBTQ people has been a major contributor to my decisions in life around where I would live. Likewise I have known many talented hardworking Ohioans who have based decisions around where they would live and work around issues such as discrimination.

Areas of the country with the strongest protections against discrimination benefit from the talent and passion of LGBTQ people staying in and joining their communities. Areas with the worst protections or hostile policies suffer from the loss of such talent.

HB 160 would create an environment that assists in our efforts to recruit and retain talented physicians and healthcare professionals to the state. It would send a signal to the rest of the country that Ohio is a fair, welcoming, forward-looking state that is a great place live, work, or build a business.

Personally, I have been married for seven years and am raising my eighteen-month-old son with my husband, who is also a physician and small business owner working in central Ohio. I believe that Ohio's laws should reflect Ohio's values that discrimination is unacceptable. I would like to be able to raise our son in a state that has affirmed this basic civil right for all its residents, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

I feel that passage of HB 160 is a critical action for ensuring the competitiveness of our state and is fundamentally morally the way Ohioans should be treating fellow hard-working, family-oriented Ohioans such as myself and my husband.

I would like to thank the committee and am willing to answer any questions.