



November 27, 2018

Re: Proponent Testimony on House Bill Number 36

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Tony Liuzzo, and I am the lead pastor of Fellowship Baptist Church in Columbus, Ohio. I have had the privilege to live in Ohio and serve in my church for the past 18 years. I write this on behalf of myself, my family, and our congregation.

My calling and purpose as a pastor are first and foremost to please God. We seek to please God by ministering to the needs of our community, strengthen families, build marriages, and support our community and leaders. We take the instruction of God seriously when He called us to pray "for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Timothy 2:2b). My goal is to live a peaceable life in godliness. We live godly lives by obeying His Word. I write this in concerns to the challenges and decisions being made concerning this very thing. The Bible is very clear that marriage is between a man and a woman. This is not my personal opinion or a Baptist view, but rather what God has declared from the very beginning with Adam and Eve. This does not mean that we do not love or care for those who live or believe contrary to biblical principles. The Bible is very clear that God loved and died for everyone. This is not an issue of hate. Our goal, as a church and followers of God, is to be a help to every person in our community. This is not an issue of loving or helping people, but rather of the biblical issue of the bond of marriage and obedience to God.

I totally understand that most of society does not live according to what the Bible says. My concern is that I am able to continue to serve God and my community without violating the Word of God. I am thankful that I live in a country that is free to live according to God's Word, but these freedoms are often challenged. It is vitally important to me and many other pastors that Bills are passed that will protect our right to live and act according to God's Word.

I have the utmost respect for our nation's leaders. I am thankful for our leadership and our freedoms. I ask you to help defend these freedoms. Please help us to not be placed into situations that would go against our convictions, our Bible, and our God. Please stand with us by allowing us to continue to be ministers to our community without violating biblical principles. Please do not place us in situations that we simply cannot compromise.

Thank you for hearing our voice! Thank you for taking the time to hear my heart. We will continue to pray for you as you stand for us.

God Bless,

  
Tony W. Liuzzo  
Lead Pastor