

Chair Bacon, Vice Chair Dolan, Ranking Minority Member Thomas, and the members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, my name is Katie Poling and I oppose House Bill 36.

I grew up as a West Ohio United Methodist preacher's kid, or PK for short. I was taught from a very early age that judgement should not be my job, but left for God to do. I can remember moving to a little town called Kingston, between Chillicothe and Circleville. There was one African American family in my school and I asked my mom one day how she would feel if I started "going with" the boy in my grade. I remember her answer very clearly. "It makes no difference, as long as the person you are with treats you with the respect you deserve."

A couple of years ago, a man approached me at a gas station. He gave me a story about traveling across state lines and needed gas money. The man was driving a nice Mercedes SUV. I agreed to fill up his tank. I used my debit card directly at the pump and felt safe doing so. My parents were in the car at the time and my dad was very upset that I did that. I told him that he instilled in me not to judge the person. If in fact it was a lie, the man would have to talk with Jesus about that on the true judgment day.

In the Bible, James Chapter 2 is A Warning Against Prejudice. "My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some over others? For example, suppose someone comes into your meeting dressed in fancy clothes and expensive jewelry, and another comes in who is poor and dressed in dirty clothes. If you give special attention and a good seat to the rich person, but you say to the poor one, 'You can stand over there, or else sit on the floor' - well, doesn't this discrimination show that your judgements are guided by evil motives? These are verses 1-4.

In chapter 4, verses 11-13: Don't speak evil against each other, dear brothers and sisters. If you criticize and judge each other, then you are criticizing and judging God's law. But your job is to obey the law, not to judge whether it applies to you. God alone, who gave the law, is the Judge. He alone has the power to save or destroy. So what right do you have to judge your neighbor?

Injustice is happening in this country every single day. How could you stand by and let this injustice for Ohioans happen? A yes vote will tell your constituents that it's ok for someone to discriminate against them for any reason. Think about that...any reason. It's not a good feeling when you've been discriminated against, is it? Have you been discriminated against? What was the situation? Why do you think the person felt the way they did? What did you do when it happened?

I am asking that you evaluate your stance and vote no on this bill.

Thank you for your time,
Katie Poling