

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

This is why: From the moment of a baby's birth, parents begin dreaming of their child's life, seeing it beautifully unfolding over the years. The central theme is usually the child's wedding day and, because I am no different from other parents, that's one of the things I envisioned: my son's wedding day – a day full of joy with a lifetime of joy to follow.

I regret that my vision of his joyful life was dimmed when my husband and I first thought our loving, kind and compassionate son was gay. Why? Not *because* he's gay – that's how God made him – but because no mother wants to see her child bullied on the playground, made fun of in the classroom, and certainly not ostracized at church.

As the mother of an LGBTQ adult and president of the Columbus chapter of PFLAG – whose vision is to create a world where diversity is celebrated, and all people are valued inclusive of their sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression – I was overjoyed in June 2015 when marriage equality became law. I thought: Finally, LGBTQ people – and the families who love them – will be treated like anyone else as they plan the most important day of their lives – their wedding day.

But now, some Ohio lawmakers want to sully that day by passing a law that is not needed. Pastors in Ohio do not need “protection” from marrying anyone – already they can say “no” to officiating the marriage of a three-time divorced man and can say “no” to a woman whose religion is different from theirs – and pastors can already can say “no” if their religious denomination teaches that God discriminates against LGBTQ people, when in fact LGBTQ people ARE God's creation AND the pastors' neighbors. HB36 is nothing more than a license for pastors to bully, make fun of and ostracize LGBTQ people on the most important day of their lives. That is why I oppose HB36. Thank you.