

Dear Chair Hambley, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Minority Member Brown, and the members of the House Civil Justice Committee:

As the parent of a transgender young adult and business owner, I am submitting this written statement in support of House Bill 369, the Ohio Fairness Act. My experience as a parent and my participation in a local tax-exempt organization that supports LGBTQ individuals and their families has raised my awareness of the issues that these individuals face.

As my son begins to make his way as a young adult, it is extremely important that he has the same protections in his choice of housing, employment and community. Ohio has an opportunity to ensure all its residents have equal protections through this proposed bill.

As a business owner, I know how important it is to have your employees focused and productive at work. It is important to attract the best and brightest talent. With more than 800 businesses joining Ohio Business Competes, a nonpartisan coalition of Ohio businesses supporting nondiscrimination policies, it is clear that businesses recognize the importance of inclusivity. No one should be denied access to a home, fear losing a job or denied public accommodations in one's community. In fact, 25 cities and 1 county in Ohio have passed such nondiscrimination ordinances. While a patchwork of rights is better than none, you have the opportunity to adopt on a statewide basis, protections for a vulnerable population that provide the fairness and safeguards to which this group is due.

I encourage you to extend anti-discrimination protections for LGBTQ individuals across the entire state.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this very important issue.