

Testimony for the Ohio General Assembly House Civil Justice Committee
August A. Napoli, CEO on behalf of United Way of Greater Cleveland

For more than 100 years, United Way of Greater Cleveland has been committed to addressing the needs of our community. As the largest private-sector funder of health and human services in Greater Cleveland, we do not believe that people in need have a hierarchy. The hungry should be fed. The cold should be clothed. The sick should be healed. We do not pick and choose who we fund based on whether or not they are gay or transgender. It's a core part of our values.

In fact, through our 99 funded programs and the generosity of this community, our vision for a thriving community is where families are healthy and financially stable; where our kids are well educated and on the road to reaching their greatest potential; where even those carrying tremendous burdens are safe and provided with the resources they need to help them become self-sufficient.

An integral part of self-sufficiency is being able to provide for your family, to get an honest day's pay for a job well done, and to put food on the table. When LGBTQ people are denied a job just because of who they are, there is no road to self-sufficiency. LGBTQ people are more likely to live in poverty, and therefore, more likely to use the services that United Way of Greater Cleveland funds.

We support the intent of HB369 and believe it's a common-sense solution to help level the playing field and to create communities with opportunities for everyone. No one should be denied employment, access to housing, and basic goods and services just because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.