

Re: Testimony in support of the Ohio Fairness Act

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

My name is Diane Debevec and I am submitting this testimony in support of House Bill 369, the Ohio Fairness Act.

Creating a welcoming atmosphere for everyone in our communities, towns, cities and state improves quality of life. Increased diversity of every kind furthers and enriches the cultural wealth of our state.

And **that** is good for business. Most large national and international corporations stand behind policies that ban discrimination of all kinds, including that based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Inclusive policies attract and keep the very best talent in our state. Without such laws in place, corporations may hesitate to locate their businesses in Ohio. Hundreds of corporations, universities, professional service firms, and small and medium businesses support this statewide policy which protects LGBTQ individuals from discrimination.

I have read that well over half of Ohio residents are in support of employment and housing laws which make discriminating based on sexual orientation or gender identity illegal. With almost two dozen localities in Ohio already offering these protections, it would make sense for the state to make this a consistent protection throughout Ohio.

I have personally witnessed the ways in which individuals experience discrimination based on their sexual orientation and gender identity, and I want to be a part of a solution that no longer allows such discrimination. I stand behind protecting all people from discrimination.

I urge you to pass House Bill 11, the Ohio Fairness Act. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Diane Debevec", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Diane Debevec
Cincinnati, OH