

Chair Hambley, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Member Brown, and the members of the House Civil Justice Committee, my name is Liz Emley, I am a doctoral student in clinical psychology at Bowling Green State University, and I am submitting this testimony in support of House Bill 369, the Ohio Fairness Act.

In my clinical work, I see clients who have experienced significant stress and mental health concerns because of issues of gender/sexual inequity. This bill would be one small but meaningful effort to increase these individuals' sense of safety and security in their employment, a luxury that those of us with privilege are easily afforded. The Ohio Fairness Act is common-sense policy based on the principles of equality, freedom, and dignity.

The Ohio Fairness Act is not only the right thing to do — it's also good for business. In the absence of comprehensive LGBTQ-inclusive nondiscrimination protections, Ohio's businesses will continue to struggle to recruit and retain talented, hard-working employees. Over 800 businesses have joined Ohio Business Competes, the statewide coalition of businesses that support LGBTQ nondiscrimination protections, to demonstrate their commitment to fair treatment and equal opportunity under the law. Businesses are investing in states with laws that foster diversity, inclusion, and a robust workforce. States like Ohio that sanction LGBTQ discrimination simply cannot compete. Employees should be judged by their performance and qualifications. Nothing more, nothing less. If you work hard to earn a living for your family, you shouldn't be punished for who you are or whom you love.

Please vote yes on House Bill 369, the Ohio Fairness Act. Thank you so much for your time and consideration!

Sincerely, Liz Emley, M.A.