

October 31, 2019

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

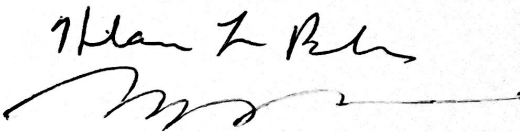
My name is Hilarie Burhans. I and my husband Mark Burhans are residents of Ohio, and own a restaurant which employs 25 individuals. I felt moved to submit testimony in support of House Bill 369, the Ohio Fairness Act.

My niece used to be my nephew. She's a brilliant student in college, and has expressed that she is finally at ease, now that she is able to present herself as the person she has always felt she was. I've also had a number of trans and gender-fluid employees at my restaurant... and of course lots of lesbian, gay and bisexual employees too. Knowing all of these hard-working, kind, smart people has enriched my life in many ways. I honestly can't IMAGINE how or why anyone would work to try to take away from them the rights that others enjoy. In the restaurant business, we have a hard time attracting and keeping competent, hardworking employees. If our state gained the reputation of being welcoming to all individuals, regardless of gender or orientation, our pool of competent, hardworking, *taxpaying* potential employees would be larger.

I've heard various Biblical arguments in favor of unequal treatment of LGBTQ people. All I can say to that is: Matthew 7:12! The most fundamental concept in Christianity is the Golden Rule: *Herefore whatever you desire for men to do to you, you shall also do to them; for this is the law and the prophets.* I can think of no other Biblical rule that would supersede this rule. Can you?

I, and the majority of voters in Ohio, are in favor of treating LGBTQ people fairly in jobs, employment and housing. I urge you to pass House Bill 369, the Ohio Fairness Act.

Thank you for reading and considering my views, which are shared by my husband who has also signed below.

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The top signature is cursive and appears to read 'Hilarie Burhans'. The bottom signature is also cursive and appears to read 'Mark Burhans'. Both signatures are written over a horizontal line.

Hilarie and Mark Burhans  
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