

Chair Hambley, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Minority Member Brown, and the members of the House Civil Justice Committee, my name is John Boggess and I am submitting this testimony in support of House Bill 369, the Ohio Fairness Act.

As a licensed real estate agent, I have to follow not only the laws and regulations of the State of Ohio, but also the code of ethics of my professional association, the National Association of Realtors (NAR). Part of that code states that I cannot be a party to discrimination involving sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. Why? Because everyone has the right to own or rent a place of safety and comfort. The State should do no less than NAR. The State should recognize that to build a robust and diverse workforce, all must be made welcome in all communities.

As I said in my testimony before Cincinnati City Council in 2006, when Council was debating similar protections, "We are not here to cause discomfort or to make a statement. We are here to mow our grass, cart our trash to the curb and keep the house painted. We shovel the neighbors' walks and help support local schools just like everyone else."

Please pass the Ohio Fairness Act.

Thank you for your time and consideration.