

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

In today's employment environment, it is hard enough to find qualified employees. If Ohio threatens to not protect LGBTQ folks from discrimination in employment status, then it will be even harder to find qualified employees.

I own a small retail business that I founded in 2010. I began franchising the brand and store in 2015, and in a few short years, we are in 28 other states. But it all started here in Ohio, and to this day, the main products we sell are made in Ohio.

Why live or stay in a state that doesn't care about you? My small business relies on the state government to send the right message of inclusiveness to all. Please, don't make it harder than it already is to operate a small business.

I urge you to pass House Bill 369, the Ohio Fairness Act.

Thank you for your time and consideration.