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Opponent Testimony on Ohio House Bill 369

November 19, 2020
House Civil Justice Committee

Chairman Hambley, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Member Brown and members of the House Civil Justice Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit this written testimony in opposition to House Bill 369, sponsored by Representatives Hillyer and Skindell.

As Executive Director of a major pro-life organization in our state, I am gravely concerned about the implications of House Bill 369, known as the Ohio Fairness Act.

Should this bill become law, Christian and pro-life ministries will be in danger of shutting down, and conscience rights for many will be in serious jeopardy. Adoption facilities will be forced to place children with homosexual couples, even if it goes against the organizations' religious principles. Catholic hospitals will be required to perform "medically necessary" gender transition procedures, again forcing them to do something that directly contradicts the religion foundation of their institutions. These are clear violations of freedom of religion. Yet, they will become the norm if this bill passes. Furthermore, female-segregated facilities like maternity homes, homeless shelters, etc. will be required to allow biological men to bathe and bunk with women.

These are just a few examples of the dangers this legislation will bring, forcing many Christians to do things in direct conflict with their faith on a daily basis. Of course, we desire respect for all individuals, but this mandate will go too far. For-profit and non-profit organizations alike need their religious freedom protected. Our families, our women, and our children need protection against those wanting to mainstream ideas that are in direct conflict with their faith.

We are being told a religious exemption clause will protect Catholic and Christian groups, but this will not be good enough. There are too many loopholes in such clauses that will allow for lawsuits, business closings, and discrimination against people of faith. An exemption clause will not hold up against the forces pushing this agenda.

On behalf of Cincinnati Right to Life and our tens of thousands of pro-life constituents, we express our strong insistence that this bill go no further. Please vote against this bill which, under the guise of providing sensitivity and compassion, would do just the opposite by persecuting Christians in Ohio.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns with House Bill 369. Should you have any questions regarding my testimony, please feel free to contact me.