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**Senate Judiciary Committee
United Way of Central Ohio
Senate Bill 11 – Proponent Testimony
Wednesday, May 22, 2019**

Chair Eklund, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Minority Member Thomas and members of the committee, United Way of Central Ohio is submitting this testimony in support of Senate Bill 11, the Ohio Fairness Act. Since 1923, United Way of Central Ohio has mobilized a diverse group of donors, volunteers and experts to reduce poverty and improve the lives of those in our community. We believe every member of our community should have the resources and opportunities to reach their potential.

United Way of Central Ohio is dedicated to providing opportunities for people to succeed. We do that by acting as a catalyst for lasting improvements and by mobilizing our community to give and volunteer. We raise funds and invest in a network of 84 funded partners that work to ensure people in crisis get food, shelter and assistance; help children succeed from cradle to career; engage residents, businesses and government in neighborhood revitalization efforts and teach people the skills they need to get and keep a good job. We bring leaders together to improve the policies and systems that directly affect thousands of lives, and we develop and implement innovative and integrated ways to reduce poverty.

Inclusion is essential to what we do. We believe inclusion creates and strengthens our community and is fundamental to reducing poverty in central Ohio.

United Way of Central Ohio supports Senate Bill 11 which extends the important principle of inclusion to sexual orientation and gender identity. No one should be denied employment, access to housing, and basic goods and services because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.