

Chair Eklund, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Minority Member Thomas, and the members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, my name is Cheryl Lindsay and I am submitting this testimony in support of Senate Bill 11, the Ohio Fairness Act.

I serve as the Associate Pastor of Mt. Zion Congregational Church in Cleveland, Ohio. My faith demands justice and freedom for all. Scripture tells me that for freedom, Christ sets us free. To live most faithfully, we must extend love and compassion to our siblings in humanity, knowing that God's love is unlimited and unbound. God loves the world, and LGBTQ persons are a valued and integral part of that world. We show our love as Christians by loving our neighbor as ourselves.

I am an ally of the LGBTQ community, and as a pastor and minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, I affirm the value and worth of every human being created in the image of God. I affirm that LGBTQ individuals are fearfully and wonderfully made and should receive fair and just treatment in all circumstances. My faith tells me that God's purposes and plans are not limited by human understanding or desires.

When one group of people are marginalized or discriminated against, we all suffer. We are all diminished. Our individual liberty is tethered to the liberty of everyone else. In a democracy, especially the United States of America, personal and collective freedom is of paramount importance. We must live up to the ideals of the founding documents of this nation, and extend liberty and justice for all.

I urge you to pass Senate Bill 11, the Ohio Fairness Act.

Thank you for your time and consideration.