

Chair Young, ranking member Miller, and other members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to speak today.

My name is Leeran Dublin-Ryan. I am a spouse, a genetic counselor, and a non-binary person. My wife and I moved to Columbus just over a year ago for her to pursue a PhD and become a therapist and for me to start my career as a genetic counselor. We thought we could be safe here. We knew there would be areas of the state that would be unfriendly to us, but we really thought we could be safe in Columbus and even considered living here long term. I am used to living in places where I do not fit. I grew up in western Kentucky where my options were to leave so I could be free to live as myself or to stay and die a slow death living in the closet. I left. I moved to Saint Louis, where I could live as myself, but only in the city limits, only in the gay neighborhoods, only in the homes of accepting friends. So, moving to Columbus, finding acceptance in so many public spaces, making friends and not worrying about if they would accept me or not, was truly a breath of fresh air. Unfortunately, the open-minded and accepting spirit of the people of Columbus is not reflected in this bill or in many pieces of anti-trans legislation that have been introduced by this state government.

Transgender children and adults deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, just like their cisgender counterparts. Transgender children and adults deserve to use the bathroom that reflects their gender identity, just like their cisgender counterparts. Transgender children and adults deserve to urinate in peace without their right to do so being scrutinized by their state government, just like their cisgender counterparts. Transgender people are not monsters, we are not scary, we are not a threat. We are just people. Every day I go to work in a hospital. I help people make sense of their genetics and determine if there is a genetic cause for their condition. I help them find resources to live their fullest life. And, on occasion, I get confronted or stared at when I use the bathroom. And, to be clear, I use women's bathrooms. I use the bathrooms this bill would legally require me to use if I were in a public school or university. No one should experience the feeling of being under a microscope every time they need to use a bathroom, especially not the most vulnerable among us. I implore you to vote no on this legislation. It is bills like this that drive people like me away from Ohio. I am a helper; my wife is a helper. We want to make life a little easier for the people in our care. Bills like this drive people like us away. Vote no on HB 183. Thank you.