



Roby & Julie King-VanDyne

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Chair Eklund, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Minority Member Thomas, and the members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

My name is Julie VanDyne. I'm an electrical engineer, a business owner, a wife and a parent. Less importantly, though more interestingly, I'm a transwoman. I transitioned in 2007. It cost me my home, my family, my lifestyle, and very nearly, my life itself. 12 years hence, it has gotten better. My transition was like most others. I lost friends, I lost family, my business lost clients. Some of it was overt. I heard things like "I can't believe you would show your face around here," "how could you do this to your family?" and "We would prefer not to be involved in that sort of thing." Some of it was less overt. I went from being the talented engineer to being the engineer who seemed to make a lot of mistakes. Some more simply would no longer take my calls.

I was fortunate, though, to have had a good education from a fine Ohio school: Ohio University in Athens. Yes, I'm a Bobcat! That education, combined with a great deal of hard work and with the patient support of my wife, retired Colonel Robyn King, and the dedicated efforts of my amazing employees, allowed me to overcome those obstacles. Today, my company and I thrive.

I owe much of that success to the fact that I had the resources that not many people in my position have. I was able to spend in excess of six figures to resolve my appearance so that I could blend in better as a woman. Most of my current clients are unaware of my history, and I work hard to keep it that way. It's stressful and takes a great deal of effort and vigilance. The vast majority of transpeople don't have that opportunity. To be fair, most folks I've come across over the years are kind and considerate, or at the very least, polite. There are a few though, who aren't. They are the ones who make transition difficult and for some of us, insurmountable.

Will Senate Bill 11 stop discrimination? In a word, no. No more than the Civil Rights act of 1964 ended discrimination against Americans of African descent. No more than laws against theft stop robbery. What SB11 will do, as do laws against criminal behavior, is that it sets a standard of behavior. It says that we as a society deem this behavior to be unacceptable. It means that we as Ohioans, say that this is wrong.

I think we all can agree that discrimination is wrong. Poll after poll shows that. Most Ohioans say that all people should be treated equally. Senate Bill 11 does just that, and only that. If someone wants to discriminate against an LGBT person, they'll find a way. They always do. But they'll have to be covert. They'll be on notice that here in the great state of Ohio, that behavior is wrong.

Thank you.