

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

I am a seminarian student who will be ordained next year, and plan to become a chaplain. I am also a member of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Columbus. My studies of the bible have shown me that God loves all his people and wants all of us to be treated fairly.

As members of the LGBTQ community, all we want is to be treated with the same rights as everybody else. I have lost my job, my housing, and been refused the use of public accommodations – all because I am a transgender woman. Like all Ohioans, I just want to be treated fairly and not be discriminated against.

When I transitioned to live my life as the woman I've always known myself to be, I was fired from my job of over 20 years, despite my high level of training and many years of experience. Despite this, it took me nearly 2 years to obtain a job in my field of experience.

I also lost my housing after transitioning and experienced difficulty in finding a place that was willing to rent to me. I was taunted in public, and even refused the use of public facilities, quite a few times. On one occasion, I was also physically assaulted and beaten.

All Ohioans deserve equal access to employment, housing, and public accommodations. Please protect people like me from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.

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

Thank you for your time and consideration.