

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

As a gay man in Ohio I have experienced abuse, bullying, and discrimination in the workplace as well as when trying to rent an apartment. As a gay man in Ohio I have found my voice is not recognized and my rights are not equal to my fellow citizens. As a gay man in Ohio I have seen acts of discrimination against my fellow community members whether they be Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning.

When marriage equality passed the Supreme court, I believed we were turning a page in our history of finding the next minority group to stomp down in this country. In several parts of the country this has been true, but to my dismay and disappointment, Ohio has not followed through.

We are taxpayers, homeowners, parents, neighbors, sisters, brothers, people you see at church, and a vital part of this community. We have sat waiting for change to occur and have been disappointed each time it has not happened. Can you imagine for a moment if you were being discriminated against because of something you could not change, something you were born with, like the color of your eyes? Just imagine the heartbreak and the frustration of being told you are not worthy enough to have protections that everyone else in this state has. The idea that you can be fired from a job, denied housing, or told to leave public establishments all because of your differences? Is that who we are as Ohioans? I believe we MUST do better.

This is a moment in our history when we can stand on the right side or once again on the wrong side. Let us stand together as people who are recognized for their basic humanity and all they offer to this State. I urge you to pass Senate Bill 11, the Ohio Fairness Act.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,
Steven Michael Dunn
Tax Payer & Concerned Citizen who happens to be Gay