

*BEFORE THE SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
PROPONENT TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 11*

Chair Eklund, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Substitute Senate Bill 11 (SB 11). My name is Sarah Taylor. In my day job I work as a legislative aide here in the Ohio Senate. I know your staffers well, as we work every day on bipartisan policy initiatives and even spend time together socially. I stand here before you today, however, as a community member and life-long Ohio resident.

Some background about me: I am 25 years old. I live in German Village. I love to bake, do yoga, and shop at the weekly farmers market. And I am the daughter of two women, Karen and Nancy. 35 years ago this November my moms, who had been dating for a number of years, bought a house together in Columbus. Despite the legality of their joint-home ownership, my moms couldn't open a shared bank account or make medical decisions for each other. They couldn't share insurance benefits and they couldn't get married. The Supreme Court's 2016 decision to legalize marriage equality addressed many of these glaring inequalities. However, three years after the Court's landmark decision, my parents could still face eviction from their home or could lose their jobs simply because they are gay.

In the early 1990s my parents had frequent, long discussions about bringing a child into a world full of homophobia. I could not be happier that, 26 years ago, they decided to start a family. By the precocious age of three, I would "out" my parents multiple times per day. I would be in the grocery store, on the playground, or in the park and would approach strangers, my pigtails bouncing behind me, to declare: "Hi! I'm Sarah and I have two mommies!" Because we lived in a city like Columbus, these people never skipped a beat, lamenting that they did not have two mommies and telling me how lucky I was.

Having two moms is the best thing that could have happened to me. My moms make the lives of everyone around them better through their quiet activism, their hard work, and their emotional intelligence. They are heavily involved in their local church and give their time and money to countless charities. They are the models for me for what makes a great parent. Great parents, in my opinion, love their children unconditionally, are selfless, and support their children's mental, emotional, and physical health.

I stand before you today a confident, eloquent, well-educated young woman. I am comfortable in my identity in no small part because my parents told me from day one that they would accept me no matter the ethnicity, religion, sexuality, or gender of the person I loved (as long as they loved and respected me in return).

In a world in which the LGBTQ community still faces stigma, hate crimes, and prejudice, let my life be an example for the universality of familial love that transcends all boundaries. Should you choose to support SB 11, you choose to help families like mine stay in their homes, keep their jobs, and access the

same public accommodations as any other family in Ohio. I urge you to support this commonsense legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my testimony to the committee today. I welcome any questions the committee may have for me at this time.