

November 27, 2018

Chair Bacon, Vice Chair Dolan, Ranking Minority Member Thomas, and the members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, my name is Jennifer Greenwood and I oppose House Bill 36.

Clergy already have this right. This bill is redundant and a waste of funding and time.

Given that clergy already have the right to turn anyone away I can only see this bill as an attempt to legalize discrimination.

Several years ago I moved to Ohio after falling in love with the breathtaking scenery, kind people, and the overall pace of life. I was beyond happy to find a welcoming home in Piqua and was even happier to begin taking part in my community. I have had the wonderful opportunity to do volunteer work and joined the board of a local community organization. I have paid taxes, voted in elections, and taken part in cleaning up the rivers and parks of my neighborhood. So imagine my surprise when I discovered that, according to Ohio, I am essentially a second-class citizen. One who who is seen as unworthy of the same rights as my heterosexual counterparts.

Like many LGBT people, I live in fear every day. Fear of physical violence, fear that my spouse or I could lose a job or be denied rights because of our marriage. Over the past decade I have been denied housing, forced to leave businesses, have missed out on job opportunities, and spent worrisome nights at a hospital hoping that I wouldn't be asked to leave my ill wife's side. Bills like HB36 mean that much of the above will continue for me and my family because discrimination will be viewed as legal and acceptable.

To put it bluntly, it is scary to live like this. Imagine being denied service for being Christian. Would this be okay with you? Because discrimination can work in many ways. Although HB 36 is seen as an LGBT issue, it is, in fact, a civil rights issue for every Ohioan.

Nothing can be gained by treating some Ohioans differently than others, but treating all Ohioans equally will be amazing for the economic climate of the state and will bring in new residents who are looking for an inclusive and beautiful place to live.

Please, consider not passing HB 36. It is redundant, wasteful, and sends a message that Ohio is not willing to treat all people equally.

Thank you for your time.

Jennifer Greenwood