

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

I am an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church and I serve as the pastor of Christ United Methodist Church on 138<sup>th</sup> and Lorain in Cleveland.

I support LGBTQ-inclusive protections for Ohio because they are still necessary, even in 2019. In my own denomination, there are still persons who believe that LGBTQ persons are not whole persons with the right to marry and to be ordained as pastors.

As the parent of two LGBTQ children, I am especially aware of the harm inflicted when anyone is considered "less than" in society. The God I worship and serve is a God who loves all, who created everyone and called them Good. To love and be loved is a right that all children of God receive by God's grace. No one should be denied that right, or treated in any way as unequal because of the gift of love, because of how they have been created.

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

Thank you for your time and consideration.