

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

In my 50 years on this planet, I have had what some would consider to be a privileged life. Even as a gay man, I have had it easy compared to most. However, I have been directly affected by discrimination. In fact, it has caused levels of anxiety that I have never recovered from, and likely never will.

I started working as an assistant superintendent for the Regional Income Tax Agency many years ago. I loved it and seriously thought I would retire from there. My direct supervisor and I got along very well; we took our lunch breaks together every day. This changed when he learned about my sexual orientation, which I made the mistake of not denying because I foolishly thought he would be more understanding. When I asked him if it was going to be a problem, his reply was... "I don't approve!".

He totally changed, and did all he could to make work miserable for me. It got so bad that I was getting physically ill just trying to get into work and, as a result, I had to go on family medical leave. I attempted to go back, but I suffered a breakdown and had to leave again.

I faced a similar situation when I worked as a head custodian for North Ridgeville City Schools. As a result, I was forced to use all of my retirement savings just to survive. Now I fear what will happen to me when I reach retirement age. I have never been on any government assistance, but I may one day require it.

Anyone who claims that these protections from discrimination are not a necessity are ignoring the discrimination that exists and/or are ignorant of the reality surrounding it.

In the name of what is just and good, please pass Senate Bill 11, the Ohio Fairness Act.

Thank you for your time and consideration.