

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

I personally support the Ohio Fairness Act as I am transgender and also have many friends who are transgender, gay, lesbian, and other members of the LGBTQ community. I have been very fortunate, living and working in Columbus, where LGBTQ protections are already in place, but my LGBTQ friends who live elsewhere have experienced discrimination in housing, employment, and other areas of life.

Aside from my personal reasons, I also support this bill because it will be good for Ohio overall. Our state needs a boost in our marketability and attractiveness to business, and with so many businesses coming out in support of LGBTQ equality, it makes good fiscal sense to declare to them that our state supports it as well. On the other side, states who have in fact passed laws *legalizing* discrimination against LGBTQ people have experienced both political and financial blowback.

I moved to Ohio over 20 years ago to attend college, but I stayed here because I love living here. Seeing the Ohio Fairness Act made into law will affirm that love for my state.

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

Thank you for your time and consideration.