

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

I am a member of the LGBTQ community, and I served in the military under “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” for 16 years. Besides the normal emotional and physical stress that a military member can endure, I had the added pressure of being discharged for who I am.

So, I was forced to hide. Today, “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” is gone. Although I am now retired, and despite all the efforts to help me as a veteran, I still can face discrimination as a lesbian in Ohio.

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

Thank you for your time and consideration.