

## Testimony Against HB 109

Members of the Committee,

My name is Kei Graves, and I am from Lorain County in our state of Ohio. I am a Black, queer, transman who has lived in this region for my whole life. Generally, I am proud of where I come from, but I also recognize that there remains much work to be done to improve our county, our state, and our nation. I have seen much friction as of late around supporting LGBTQ+ inclusion and implore each of you to think critically about the ways that these bills you're advocating for exponentially harm marginalized communities who call Ohio our home.

I am imploring you to consider the adverse effects (whether intentional or unintentional) of passing HB 109. Not only does a legislature such as this one hold the potential to harm events such as LGBTQ+ Pride celebrations, but other gatherings such as those advocating for racial justice and equity. Points concerning the bill include language that labels a group of four or more people causing "disorderly conduct," which is broadly defined as a riot. This could mean for Pride celebrations, which are a solid visual representation of the celebration of humanity, is that these celebrations could be categorized as a riot. It could also mean that groups who are protesting for their rights not to be disproportionately harmed by specific systems, such as policing, improper treatment by healthcare officials, and otherwise could be targeted. Specifically, I am thinking of all the times when I, as a queer person of color, have been questioned about my belonging in a particular space, neighborhood, or entity. I know that we, both people of color and LGBTQ+ people, are disproportionately likely to experience over-policing, bias, and potentially targeting groups for gathering in public spaces. A bill like this would allow that targeting not only to be continued but also encouraged through the law.

It is for this reason that I am strongly recommending that the bill not be passed. We as a state and as a nation have much to do undo related to these inequities and passing a bill like this would only exacerbate the issues.