



House Government Oversight Committee
OHRGovernmentOversightCommittee@ohiohouse.gov

May 14, 2024

RE: HB467 Exemption to Candidate Disclosure of Name Change

Dear Chair Rep. Peterson and respected Committee Members:

For far too long, transgender individuals seeking elected office in our state have faced a significant barrier to participation due to outdated and discriminatory regulations. The requirement to disclose previous names used within the last five years not only imposed an unnecessary burden on candidates but also had the harmful consequence of forcibly outing trans individuals to the public. This year, Ohio made headlines when four trans individuals running for Ohio office found their candidacy challenged by a rule that not only did they have no knowledge of, but with which they could not reasonably comply: there was no space on the official forms to include a prior name.

Imagine for a moment the courage it takes to step forward as a candidate for public office, to aspire to serve one's community, only to be met with a bureaucratic obstacle that demands disclosure of deeply personal and often painful information. This requirement not only undermines the privacy and autonomy of transgender individuals but also perpetuates stigma and discrimination against our community.

This year was not the first time that a transgender person has run for office in our state, and it surely will not be the last. HB467 presents a crucial opportunity to right this wrong and ensure that all Ohioans, regardless of gender identity, can participate fully and authentically in the democratic process. By adding an exemption to existing law and providing a standardized form that includes a space for previous names, this bill acknowledges the diverse experiences of individuals who may have undergone name changes and affirms their right to privacy and dignity.

Moreover, by explicitly stating that candidates are not required to disclose name changes made by Ohio court order, HB467 aligns with existing legal procedures and safeguards against potential misuse of personal information. This not only protects trans candidates from unwarranted scrutiny but also upholds the integrity of our electoral system.

Founded in 2005, TransOhio is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting the trans and allied communities in Ohio. TransOhio works to promote transgender rights, raise awareness about transgender issues, and provide resources and support to trans individuals and their allies.

This is not just a matter of legal technicality; it is a matter of justice and equality. By supporting this bill, you have the opportunity to send a powerful message that Ohio values the rights and dignity of all its citizens, regardless of gender identity. We urge you to stand on the right side of history, to uphold the principles of fairness and inclusivity that lie at the heart of our democracy, and to swiftly advance HB467.

Respectfully,
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