

291 S. Terrace Ave.
Columbus, Ohio 43204
419-231-2204

Honorable Members of the Committee,

I write to you today as a proponent of House Bill 467, a crucial legislation introduced by Representatives Piccolantonio and Grim. This bill seeks to rectify a grave injustice inflicted upon transgender candidates during recent primary races in Ohio.

The current law, dating back to the 1990s, mandates the disclosure of political candidates' name changes within five years. However, this seemingly innocuous requirement has been wielded as a tool of discrimination against transgender individuals. Three trans candidates were unfairly targeted during the primaries, facing disqualification simply because they did not disclose their deadnames—the names assigned to them at birth but discarded as they transitioned to align with their true identities.

This selective enforcement of an obscure law is not only unjust but fundamentally undermines the principles of democracy and inclusivity. Our democracy thrives when it represents the rich tapestry of its citizens, irrespective of gender identity or expression. Yet, by allowing such discriminatory practices to persist, we perpetuate a system that systematically disenfranchises marginalized communities.

House Bill 467 offers a beacon of hope in this bleak landscape. By recognizing court-ordered name changes as exceptions to the current disclosure rules, this bill ensures that transgender candidates are not unfairly penalized for embracing their authentic selves. It safeguards their right to participate in the democratic process on equal footing with their cisgender counterparts.

Moreover, the arbitrary and subjective application of the existing law underscores the need for this legislation. The fact that the Secretary of State's instructions packet did not mention this rule highlights the erratic nature of its enforcement. Such ambiguity opens the door to abuse and discrimination, threatening the very foundation of our democratic principles.

Passing House Bill 467 is not just a matter of legality but a moral imperative. It sends a clear message that Ohio stands firmly against discrimination in all its forms and is committed to upholding the principles of equality and justice for all its citizens. Let us not allow outdated laws to hinder progress and inclusivity. Let us stand on the right side of history by supporting this vital legislation.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,



Mr. Lis Regula, Ph. D.