

To: Ohio House of Representatives, State Government Committee  
Chairman Gerberry, Ranking Member Daniels  
Members of the Committee

From: Crystal Y. Dixon, Private Citizen of Northwest Ohio

Date: June 9, 2009

Re: Opponent Testimony – House Bill 176

Dear Honorable Legislators:

My name is Crystal Dixon, a resident of Northwest Ohio and native of Toledo, Ohio. I am an African-American woman and sincerely practicing Christian. After being recruited to the University of Toledo in 2002 as a human resources administrator and progressively promoted based upon my job performance, in April 2008, my boss signed papers for my promotion to the permanent role of Associate Vice President for Human Resources with the newly merged University of Toledo. Less than a month later, on May 8, 2008, I was terminated by the President of the University of Toledo for expressing, as a private citizen, my concerns about equating the civil rights struggles of homosexuals with the genuine civil rights struggles of African-Americans. My firing by a University that I loved and served well, ended a stellar 25 plus year career in the public and private sectors in Ohio and Michigan. Today, over a year later, I remain unemployed, after diligently trying to find meaningful employment wherein I can use my talents and skills. I have both an earned Master's Degree and a Bachelor's Degree. Despite my diligent efforts to secure new full-time employment since my firing, I have been largely unsuccessful. Accordingly, I immersed much of my efforts in starting my own businesses and in writing novels.

I am writing to you today to offer you, in a respectful, logical and reasoned fashion, another perspective of House Bill 176. First of all, in my career as a human resources professional, I hired and recommended the hiring of both homosexual and heterosexual individuals based upon their job-related skills and abilities. I, like many reasonable persons of religious faith and non-religious faith, hold that homosexual behavior is morally and/or scripturally wrong. At the same time, my Christian faith inspires me to love people and to exercise good business practices in my professional life. My human resource strategy was centered on hiring and promoting the most qualified candidates--regardless of their sexual orientation--not only because it is the right thing to do but simply because it is good business practice.

House Bill 176 is inherently discriminatory against African-Americans and other protected classes. I have written before, that I cannot wake-up tomorrow and not be Black. I was born that way as my Creator sovereignly designed me. However, homosexual behavior is a lifestyle choice that can be modified on a daily basis. Each day one can choose to engage in homosexual behavior or not to engage in homosexual behavior. Creating laws to "protect" such lifestyle choices inflicts a discriminatory impact upon those persons who cannot alter their genetically immutable characteristics, like eye and skin color. Accordingly, House Bill 176 requires

Ohioans to affirm and celebrate other persons' lifestyle choices contrary to their own sincerely held religious beliefs.

Civil rights laws were established to protect politically powerless persons who have experienced a history of discrimination resulting in economic deprivation and second class status within our nation. As an African-American fired largely due to "pressure" from a small but powerful group of homosexual advocates, I am a living example of the power of the homosexual lobby and proof that homosexuals have no pervasive history of discrimination. Furthermore, homosexuals generally possess more advanced education and higher earning power than most Americans, especially African-Americans.

My final point, is that House Bill 176 will impose a requirement that public school students and all other Ohioans be educated on the origin of prejudice against groups based upon their sexual orientation. This is a draconian violation of parents', students', and citizens' rights to hold and practice their religious beliefs and an affront to minority civil rights struggles. Indeed, the proposed comprehensive educational program would force those who believe that homosexual behaviors are contrary to their sincerely held religious teachings, to be silent, or automatically be labeled a "hate-monger," ostracized, bullied or as in my case, fired from a job I loved. Such a result is not based in diversity, but exclusion and aimed at silencing opposing viewpoints by affixing degrading social labels when challenged.

Understand that not only do I fully support the fair employment practices of persons of all sexual orientations, but have done so in practice. I believe that House Bill 176 is NOT needed as such practices are already enjoyed by persons of all sexual orientations. Indeed, Andrew Sullivan, writer in one of the nation's most widely read homosexual magazines, posed this question in his article, "Do We Need These Laws?" His answer: *"Employment discrimination is a red herring. National gay groups love it because they are part of the lobbyist-lawyer nexus that will gain from it and because their polls tell them it's the least objectionable of our aims. But anyone could tell them it's the least objectionable because it's the least relevant."*

For these and many other reasons which you shall hear from fellow opponents of this bill, I respectfully request that you NOT approve House Bill 176. It is not needed since these are rights that are already enjoyed by persons regardless of their sexual orientation, and it is inherently discriminatory against Ohio residents, citizens and students in numerous ways. The real purpose behind House Bill 176 is to illegally force societal acceptance on what many Ohioans believe to be unhealthy and morally wrong lifestyles. Indeed, such forced societal acceptance and political correctness is what led to my firing. Additionally, the adoption of House Bill 176 will result in an unnecessary and unavoidable collision between a mandated acceptance of that which is "politically correct" and sincerely held religious beliefs. Such collision violates individual rights, displays a non-tolerance of those with sincerely held religious beliefs and is discriminatory. Finally, House Bill 176 violates individual minority rights and is discriminatory against religious beliefs.

Thank you lady and gentlemen for your time and consideration of my opponent testimony on House Bill 176. I respectfully urge you to do the right thing and vote NO on House Bill 176.