

Proposed: 10/16/23

RESOLUTION NO. 165-2023(COTW),
First Reading

By Council President Hart

A Resolution expressing the city's strong support of Senate Bill 132, which is known as the Ohio Fairness Act, which will provide the same protections under Ohio's antidiscrimination laws to members of the LGBTQIA+ community as are provided to all Ohio residents; and declaring the necessity that this legislation become immediately effective as an emergency measure.

WHEREAS, there has been a long history of discrimination against members of the LGBTQIA+ community in this State and Country; and

WHEREAS, a strong movement developed to oppose such discrimination beginning in the 1950's and reached a turning point in June of 1969 with the Stonewall bar incident in New York where LGBTQIA+ people actively opposed police repression; and

WHEREAS, there have been a number of strong leaders of the LGBTQIA+ community in Cleveland Heights who have successfully advocated for ordinances which: established a domestic partner registry in 2003, banned discrimination against the LGBTQIA+ community in 2014 [Chapter 749 of the Codified Ordinances], banned discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression in contracting with the City government [2023], and banned conversion therapy [2023]; and

WHEREAS, discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or expression or gender identity has not been outlawed statewide but has been outlawed in several municipalities which include a large percentage of the state's population; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 132 ("SB 132") which has been introduced in the State Senate in June 2023 would, if passed, ban discrimination because of gender identity or sexual expression or orientation statewide similarly to what Chapter 749 of the Cleveland Heights Codified Ordinances does for residents of this city; and

WHEREAS, SB 132 is called the Ohio Fairness Act because it will bring fairness to the State of Ohio's anti-discrimination laws; and

WHEREAS, SB 132 has bipartisan support; and

WHEREAS, over 7% of the population of the USA say that they are members of the gay community, [<https://www.statista.com/topics/1249/homosexuality/>] and that population is growing as 20% of Gen Z identify as LGBTQIA+ [<https://news.gallup.com/poll/389792/lgbt-identification-ticks-up.aspx>]

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WHEREAS, the LGBTQIA+ population needs protection as much as other protected groups under Ohio's Civil Rights Act; and

WHEREAS, the City of Cleveland Heights is a Welcoming City that prides itself on being a safe space for all people within its borders and where "All Are Welcome"; and

WHEREAS, the federal government has not banned discrimination on the basis of gender identity, sexual orientation or expression leaving the LGBTQIA+ community less protected than other groups who form protected classes under the law; and

WHEREAS, as discrimination and hate crimes against the gay community have grown recently due to inflammatory rhetoric by some politicians, banning discrimination based on gender identity, sexual orientation or expression is necessary for keeping the peace and for the good order of our statewide society; and

WHEREAS, a statewide ban on such discrimination would increase the safety of members of the LGBTQIA+ community in every part of the state instead of the current status of feeling and being secure only in some municipalities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, that:

SECTION 1. The Council and Mayor of the City of Cleveland Heights hereby express their strong support of Senate Bill 132 ("SB 132") and request that all members of the Ohio Legislature support SB 132; and specifically request that legislators from Northeast Ohio stand behind SB 132 since many of the municipalities of Northeast Ohio have already banned discrimination against the LGBTQIA+ community; and

SECTION 2. This Council and the Mayor strongly urge the residents of Cleveland Heights to contact the following members of the Senate's Government Oversight Committee asking them to vote 'aye' on SB 132 and to advocate for that bill with their colleagues:

Senator Kristina Roegner – D 27 – Cuyahoga Valley and Falls - R

Senator Niraj Antoni – D 6 – Dayton – R

Senator Paula Hicks-Hudson – D 11 – Toledo – D

Senator George Lang – D 4 – Hamilton – R

Senator Rob McColley – D1 Findlay area – R

SECTION 3. The Clerk of Council is hereby directed to forward a copy of this Resolution to State Representative Juanita O. Brent, State Senator Kent Smith, Governor Mike DeWine, the Speaker of the Ohio House, Minority Leader of the Ohio House, Ohio Senate President, and the Minority Leader of the Ohio Senate.

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SECTION 4. It is necessary that this Resolution become immediately effective as an emergency measure necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety of the inhabitants of the city of Cleveland Heights, such emergency being the need to express timely support of HB 420. Wherefore, provided it receives the affirmative vote of five or more members elected or appointed to this Council, this Resolution shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its passage; otherwise, it shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest time allowed by law.

MELODY JOY HART
President of Council

ADDIE BALESTER
Clerk of Council

PASSED:

Presented to Mayor: _____ Approved: _____

KAHLIL SEREN
Mayor