

## **FAQs about H.B. 176, the Equal Housing and Employment Act (EHEA)**

**What will the EHEA do?** It is currently legal under Ohio law to fire someone or deny them housing for being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. The EHEA will add sexual orientation and gender identity to the list of groups already protected by state non-discrimination laws. That will make it illegal to discriminate against LGBT people in employment, housing and public accommodations – just like it’s illegal to discriminate based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, or disability.

**Which employers are covered?** Adding sexual orientation and gender identity to our non-discrimination laws will not force a business to hire anyone. It will just level the playing field when it comes to candidate selection and interviews. There are some exceptions. Religious institutions and businesses with 15 or fewer employees are except and may continue to discriminate against LGBT people.

**Who enforces the new law?** The EHEA will be enforced by the Ohio Civil Rights Commission (OCRC). The OCRC is responsible for enforcing state non-discrimination laws for all protected groups.

**How do I make a complaint?** You can file a complaint with the Ohio Civil Rights Commission. For more information about how to file a complaint, visit their website <http://crc.ohio.gov/> or call toll free 1-888-278-7101.

**When will the law go into effect?** The Ohio House of Representatives passed HB 176 on September 15, 2009 by a vote of 56 – 39. Next, the bill must be considered and passed by the Ohio Senate. After the bill is passed by both the House and Senate, then it goes to the Governor for his approval. The bill will become law 90 days after signed by the Governor.

### **What can I do to help?**

- Call or write your Ohio Senator and Representative to urge them to support H.B. 176, the EHEA.
- Speak out – write a letter to the editor of your local paper or tell a friend about the EHEA.
- If you’re not already a member, join the ACLU and help us work for equal rights.

### **For more information**

- Visit the website “Do What’s Right Ohio” at [www.dowhatsrightohio.com](http://www.dowhatsrightohio.com).
- Read the full bill or a summary of H.B. 176 on the Ohio General Assembly’s website, <http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/>.