

**HB 5959 and HB 5804
December 3, 2014**

**Statement of Brian Walker, CEO, Herman Miller, Inc., to Hon. Frank Foster, Chair,
Commerce Committee**

This statement is offered in support of amending the Elliott Larsen Civil Rights Act (ELCRA) to include "sexual orientation and gender identity."

I have been President and Chief Executive Office of Herman Miller Inc. since 2004. I am also a founding member and Co-Chair of the Michigan Competitive Workforce Coalition, a recent collaboration of business leaders who have joined together in support of modernizing ELCRA to protect the gay and transgender communities. And Herman Miller is a Gold Founding Partner of the West Michigan LGBT Chamber of Commerce and assisted in the formation of the regional chapter.

I am proud to be President and CEO of a company whose inspiring designs, inventive technologies and strategic services help people do great things and organizations to perform at their best. We generated approximately \$1.9 billion in revenue in fiscal 2014 and our designs can be found in the permanent collections of museums worldwide. Herman Miller was named among the 50 Best U.S. Manufacturers by Industry Week and is included in the Dow Jones Sustainability World Index and trades on the NASDAQ Global Select Market.

I am also proud to acknowledge that this last week Herman Miller earned its eighth consecutive perfect score in the Corporate Equality Index, a national benchmarking survey and report on corporate policies and practices related to LGBT workplace equality, administered by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation. The company joins the ranks of 366 major U.S. businesses which also earned top marks this year. That index evaluates LGBT-related policies and practices including non-discrimination workplace protections, domestic partner benefits, transgender-inclusive health care benefits, competency programs, and public engagement with the LGBT community. Herman Miller's efforts in satisfying all of the CEI's criteria results in a 100 percent ranking and the designation as a Best Place to Work for LGBT Equality.

Embracing the unique talents and perspectives of all our employees is an integral part of our business strategy. By doing so, we create more innovative solutions for our customers, develop stronger community and supplier relationships, and provide a supportive environment where all employees feel welcome and able to bring their whole selves to work. Unfortunately, our own workplace practices come up against the state-wide reality that it is still legal in Michigan to fire someone, refuse housing, or refuse service to this community, all things that directly undermine our own efforts in the workplace.

At Herman Miller we take a forward view, working to build products that are relevant for today's work and life environments. Furniture often becomes an icon of the kind of culture you're trying to create and how you want it to feel. We must constantly ask "How do we broaden our horizons and the people we can reach out to?"

Inclusiveness and diversity—words we've had at Herman Miller for years and ideas we've honored here for decades—have become the best way we know how to build a lasting and resilient community. Inclusiveness and diversity aren't guaranteed. By updating ELCRA, the legislator and Governor will help ensure that we can all realize our individual and collective potential.

Under the leadership of Governor Rick Snyder, the environment for Michigan is better than it's been in a long time and has been inclusive of a broad political spectrum, which has been great to see. The time is now to modernize the ELCRA and send a warm and welcoming message to talent around the world that this State will welcome them.