

GENDER
PUBLIC
ADVOCACY
COALITION

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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Judiciary Committee Public Hearing
March 24, 2006

Senate Chairman McDonald
House Chairman Lawlor

H.B. No. 5597 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING DISCRIMINATION

Distinguished Members of the Judiciary Committee; thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony in support of the essential civil liberties and individual rights of the citizens of the State of Connecticut. Civil rights are positive legal prerogatives; the right to equal treatment before the law. The Gender Public Advocacy Coalition or GenderPAC works to ensure that every person has an equal chance to pursue their career and succeed in the workplace without discrimination

Discrimination against employees because they don't fit someone's ideal for masculinity or femininity remains common in the workplace. Prominent legal cases in recent years involve female employees fired for refusing to wear make-up, for being "too aggressive," and for not looking feminine enough, as well as man employees fired because they were considered small and weak, effeminate, or simply not aggressive enough.

At special risk are Transgender Americans, who are routinely targeted for discrimination in workplaces, housing, and public accommodations. Transgender employees are frequently fired the moment they inform employers they will be changing genders, or – if they have already changed gender – the moment employers or coworkers learn of or suspect their medical history. They often face similar difficulties in the most necessary and mundane of social tasks, such as finding places to live, and are regularly asked to leave restaurants, hotels, stores, medical facilities and educational institutions.

The Gender Public Advocacy Coalition believes that one should lose their job or be denied a place to live because of their gender identity or expression. We are encouraged by the seven states, 75+ cities and municipalities, 52 colleges and universities and 104 major corporations which apparently agree and have already added *gender identity and expression* to their non-discrimination laws or policies

Therefore, the Gender Public Advocacy Coalition asks this Committee and the General Assembly to pass HB 5597 to make certain that all citizens of the State of Connecticut are free from discrimination.

Respectfully Submitted,



Riki Wilchins
Executive Director