

Read by Amy Miller, CWEALF
Public Testimony HB 5597
March 24, 2006

I am submitting this testimony to you as an anonymous constituent for the simple reason that one of my family members experiences discrimination based on gender identity and expression, and I am afraid that this situation will worsen by stating my name.

I am requesting that you and the Judiciary Committee support **House Bill 5597 "An Act Concerning Discrimination"** because it will add the words "**Gender Identity or Expression**" to the states non-discrimination statutes.

This legislation is important to me because I am the mother of a transgender person. My 30 year-old former daughter, who is a law student, is transitioning to a male identity after many years of deep personal questioning of his birth gender. He is a sincere, hard-working, and generous person who has spent the major portion of his adult life pursuing a college education and a law career in order to make a positive impact on the lives of people within his community. My family is very aware of the discrimination that he will most likely face as he applies his talent and many years of experience to holding a position in the judicial system. It has taken an incredible amount of courage to be himself. He pays the price of discrimination many times over in both subtle and outright ways each day. He has dealt with it in housing, employment, social services, and with basic medical needs.

Above all, I am writing to you today because my family recognizes the very real safety concerns that gender nonconforming people face on a daily basis in our society. Adding "gender identity and expression" will provide my son with some of the support he will need to pursue his career and make a contribution to the legal and business community. It will make a clear, public statement of statewide policy that will educate and inform communities in very specific language about the law. As his mother and as a teacher in the CT public school system, I am keenly aware of the difficulties that nonconformity presents in our society, and people who identify and express themselves in any different manner are a target for discrimination and even serious bodily harm. The statistics are frightening. His safety is always my family's biggest concern. Please vote in favor of House Bill 5597. Thank you for considering this matter on our behalf.