



American Friends Service Committee

Quaker values in action

Testimony of Kasha Ho, American Friends Service Committee 23 Girard Ave, Hartford, CT 06105

In Support of HB 5597

March 24, 2006

I would like to thank chairs Sen. McDonald and Rep. Lawlor, ranking members Sen. Kissel and Rep. Farr and the other distinguished members of this Judiciary Committee for allowing me to speak in support of HB 5597, An Act Concerning Discrimination. My name is Kasha Ho, and I will be speaking today as the Program Coordinator of the American Friends Service Committee as well as from my personal experience as the significant other of someone who is transgendered.

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) was founded in 1917, as a practical expression of Quaker (Religious Society of Friends) principles of nonviolence, peace, justice, and equality. The central concept of Quakerism, that there is that of God in everyone, leads naturally to a respect for human beings in all our great diversity. It also leads to a belief that everyone is entitled to full freedom of life and expression. This understanding is at the heart of AFSC's long-standing commitment to work and support of LGBT people. Locally, the AFSC community supports transgender rights and struggles for equality, and we look forward to seeing these rights upheld by the passing of this anti-discrimination legislation.

As the significant other of someone who is transgendered, this legislation affects me personally. My partner, Micah, is twenty one years old and he is preparing to graduate from college this May. It is an exciting time for both of us as we look forward to starting our lives together. Like many of his classmates, Micah is worried about getting a job after college. Unfortunately, his concerns are well founded. Right now in Connecticut it is legal for employers to discriminate against him because of his gender identity. When we look for a home together, we are not protected against housing discrimination. We know from the life experiences of others in the Trans community that discrimination is the hard reality for those who have the bravery and strength to express their true identities.

With this legislation we have the opportunity to ensure that basic human rights are protected for all Connecticut citizens. I ask for your support to ensure that HB 5597 passes this session. With this law in place, Micah and I can embark on our lives with the assurance that our state values and protects our dignity and human rights.

Thank you,

Kasha Ho

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