

My name is Michelle Hansen and I live in Waterbury. I began transitioning publicly in 1974. Among other things I am an Episcopal Priest. I was, however, earning my living in the computer industry working for a medium size computer repair and training company. I had worked for this company for almost 18 years and was their senior technical trainer.

A week after notifying my employer of my plans to transition I was released. I was given a three page lawyer prepared letter. The letter explained not why I was laid off but what weren't the reasons. In addition I was offered a small severance if I would agree not to sue them. It is clear that they were thinly veiling their true reasons for letting me go.

I have not worked a full time job since that day. When I was released I lost my short and long term disability insurance and two months later was diagnosed with cancer. I have been treated and should be able to work. Even though I am well qualified I have been unable to get even an interview.

I believe that senate bill 1044 to protect the rights of all people no matter what their gender identity or expression is essential. There is nothing more critical than the ability to support one's self. I have two master's degrees from Yale and I have a long list of certifications in the computer industry, but still have no job.

I hope that there will be no further stories like mine after the passage of SB1044.

Thank you,

The Rev. Michelle Hansen, S.T.M, M.Div., BA