

Dear Representative Melissa Olson:

I am submitting testimony to you as a mother of a transgender person who has experienced discrimination based on gender identity and expression. Last year my testimony was read anonymously because I was afraid that his position as a law clerk would somehow be jeopardized by his transitioning. He has spent the major portion of his adult life pursuing a college education and a law career in order to make a positive impact in his community. My family is aware of the discrimination that he will 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 for him 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. 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 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. His safety is always my family's greatest concern. I am requesting that you and the Judiciary Committee support **S.B.1044** because it will add the words "Gender Identity or Expression" to the states non-discrimination statutes. Thank you for considering this matter on our behalf.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia Levasseur
357 New London Tpke.
Norwich, CT 06360