

Sara Ferah's Testimony SB 1044

I would like to thank the co-chairs Senator McDonald and Representative Lawlor for this opportunity to show my support for SB 1044, An Act Concerning Discrimination.

I have lived in Connecticut for a year and a half.

When I first moved here and discovered that Connecticut has the oldest school for deaf people in the country, I thought to myself, wow, Connecticut is a really welcoming place for deaf people.

Later I discovered that the busses here are wheel-chair accessible. I thought Connecticut is so welcoming to her wheel-chair bound citizens.

Then I went to the True Colors Conference, for sexual minority youth, where I saw people who genuinely care for the well being of children. I wish that I had something like True Colors where I grew up.

Recently, I was at the Department of Motor Vehicles, and one of the employees seemed to be blind. This night, when I was at home, I thought to myself, Connecticut is one of the most welcoming places in the whole country.

But, I myself . . . I do not feel welcomed!

I am Sara Ferah and I am a trans-woman. This means that my gender and my body do not match. I am woman, but my body is a male body.

I have observed that as a trans-woman, it is extremely difficult to find a job, and if I am fired because of discrimination, there is no legal protection for me.

Before I found my present home, I was turned away from several homeless shelters - from men's shelters – from women's shelters . . . I was forced to have sex, against my will, in exchange for shelter, because I had no where else to go!

I feel scared when I have no job security and when I have no housing security. I feel saddened that Connecticut does not yet care about us gender variant people. Otherwise, Connecticut is a beautiful community where I have made my home. All I want is for you to make me feel welcomed.

Me and my partner are starting a family. Please raise and support SB 1044. Please tell me, my partner, and our future child – tell us that our family is welcomed – tell us that Connecticut cares about our family.

There are many gender variant persons who could not speak today because they fear losing their jobs or becoming homeless. They live their lives in secret and whole families are suffering.

Raise and pass this bill, and send forth a message – that no family in Connecticut is unwelcome . . . and that Connecticut cares about all of its families – that you care about my family.

Please support SB 1044, An Act Concerning Discrimination.

Thank You.