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Testimony of Brenda Jean Louise

Last year, the House Bill for Transgender human rights was ready for vote. But apparently some difficulties arose at the final voting session. I'm to understand they didn't want that kind of law, some say it was something with the wording obviously, there was a lack of understanding by some about who we are. Well, we're back here again, to do the process all over. I'd like to take this opportunity to bring some items to light.

Some would say that religion condemns us. They quote their doctrines and say that God doesn't intend for people to get a sex change. They absolutely disregard any scientific, medical or psychological reasoning for our need to live as the other gender. Furthermore, they hand pick various passages in the bible to back up their doctrine while ignoring the rest of what the bible says regarding various topics. They themselves are guilty of not adhering to all the literal passages in the bible. Please don't take me wrong, far be it for me to condemn religion. I was a Deacon for 4 of the 8 years in the full gospel church I once attended, so I'm also well acquainted with the tactics they used to disparage us. They're wrong, very wrong about us. And even if they thought they were right, I ask, don't we live in a democracy, and not a theocracy? Am I to be denied my basic human rights because they say so? Sadly, more than a few Transgendered folks underwent severe persecution from their fellow congregants and excommunication. Although I voluntarily ceased to attend the church I belonged to (because of my decision to come out and undergo transition therapy) they still cursed my name at its mention. The minister, of whom I was close friends with for 8 years, asked me not to visit him at his home ever again. Is this what Jesus would do? I think not.

Some would say that we're a perversion ... a bad example for their children to see ... a disgusting sight to see in public. They'll be damned if we worked in their shop, or entered their store, or used their bathroom Heaven forbid to even worship in their church. Some would say that our kind doesn't belong in their town, or on their street, or in the apartment upstairs. Some have gone as far as to label us as pedophiles. They're wrong again. We're not perverts or pedophiles. We're civilized human beings. Some have even gone further and hurt us, even killed us, all because we're Transgendered.

Listen, your sons and daughters won't become Transgender because we are. It's not an infection. They were born that way. They'll come out as Transgender because they are. It's a medical fact. We exist. Do you want them to go through Hell like we did, and live our lives secretly in fear of humiliation, retaliation and condemnation, only to finally get the overwhelming need and courage to come out when they are middle aged?

If you had Transgendered sons and daughters, wouldn't you like to know that their basic human rights were guaranteed to them? There's already a law on the books that protects those who are Gay. All we're asking, is that you include us in that law as well. What's the problem?

Most likely, you've even worked side by side knowing us only by our birth genders, and not by the real Transgender issue in our brains. We've worked as ministers, policemen, firemen, doctors, lawyers, professors, teachers, corporate executives, sailors, marines, army soldiers, the air force, special ops, decorated war heroes, yes and even politicians. Many are technical engineers of various disciplines, computer specialists, even construction workers and truck drivers. Most of us have raised children in our lives. We've paid our taxes. Many have worked in professional jobs, even being thought of as key employees. We're registered Democrats, Independents, and Republicans. We're your constituents. We vote.

Transsexuals (both those who've had their surgeries, and those who haven't had the chance either because of financial situations or poor health) have experienced the loss of their spouses, the loss of their children, their siblings or relatives, and even their parents all because of being Transgendered.

Adding to that heap of woes, is the fear that your employer can fire you just because of the fact that you're Transgendered. Is that fair? There've been many articles and books written about us in a positive way, not to mention the many television documentaries that have tried to inform their viewers about what it's like to be Transgendered. Decent scientific and medical information is out there. As a matter of fact, I've taken the liberty of providing you with a data disk that has a wide selection of published Transgender related articles so you can read and learn more about us.

As far as I was concerned, there was only one absolutely necessary thing for me to do to keep my sanity. That was to transition. My two psychologists and doctor that were treating me agreed. I had my surgery in October 2003. Immediately after, my employer chose to fire me.

That was his way of saying "thank you" for the 7 years that I worked there, and for all the good profitable things that I did for his company. If there was a protective law for me at the time, his attitude towards me may have been different. If not, at least I would have had affective litigation to back me up in court.

I was here last year and gave testimony to you. You have it on record. You have others testimony on record too. You have what's been said here today on record. You can't simply dismiss what's been said. That's not ethical or fair to us.

In sincere solidarity, I, Brenda Jean Louise, have come here again to testify, along with the many other Transgendered folks and our backers here today. I ask you to get beyond your transphobias and misinformed opinions of us and take a second look and agree that we are indeed in need of legal protections that will insure our basic human rights. I ask you to do what is right and fair by us. I ask you to support and vote "YES" on the HB5723 amendment bill.

Brenda J Louise
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