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**2008 Testimony to the Judicial Committee  
An Act Concerning Discrimination HB5723**

Honorable chairmen, senators and representatives, my name is Diana Lombardi and I live in Berlin. I would like to urge you to vote in favor of HB 5723 An Act Concerning Discrimination,

Since I testified here last year, more trans-people have lost their jobs or are worrying if the next paycheck will be their last one. Meanwhile other trans-people have been struggling to find a job, any job to help them feed their families. They want to work, they have the skills to do the jobs, but no one will hire them because they are transgendered. Every time I attend a support group, I hear the same worry... I am afraid that I will be fired if my boss found out that I am transgendered. They live with this constant fear.

A friend told me that when she told her boss that she was going to transition, he warned her that if she did she would be fired.

Another friend down in the southern part of the state was up for a promotion at a large box store and when she asked why she didn't get the promotion; she was told, "Well, you know, because... you're..." Unfortunately, we do know all too well why we are denied promotions and when we do get a job we are stuck in low paying jobs with no chance for advancement because of discrimination.

I could go on and on with stories of discrimination, however it does not have to be like that; I have friends who transitioned at work without any problems. Human Resources worked together with her and developed policies to help her and the companies through her transition. Their customers and vendors just blinked, paused and said, "OK" then they went on with their business.

All we are asking for is an equal chance at a job, all jobs, and not just some jobs. We cannot have this law cover some jobs and not others.

I retired last year and I have been living full since last June and I was apprehensive about transitioning, I didn't know what to expect. To my amazement, it has gone smoothly. Most of the businesses made the transition easy I just sent them a copy of the probate order and they changed the name on the account, but others businesses made my life miserable. They had no clue in how to go about the change; one credit card company took three tries before they got it right. Another company suggested at first that it would be easier if I close the account and open a new account, but then I would lose my credit history with the company.

One night I stopped at a fast food restaurant on the Berlin Turnpike, while I was standing in line the staff were coming out from the back room and looking at me. One of the employees walked by with his wrist limp, swaying his hips and from the back of the store I could hear giggling. I spoke to the manager at the counter and his reply was, "They are only high school students, what do you expect?" my answers was, "They are also your employees." I didn't press it any further. In another incident a couple of months ago, while I was at a neighborhood grocery store, the person who was bagging groceries looked at me and said, "What the hell are you?" he then walked away and started bagging another check-out line. The checkout clerk apologized while bagging my groceries; she was embarrassed by his behavior. So far, when I go back to that store I have not met that individual again. Without this bill, there is no incentive for an employer to train their employees about gender identity discrimination

I am not naïve enough to think that this bill will do away with discrimination and harassment, but it will make an employer, business or property owner think twice. This bill will show that the state of Connecticut does not condone any type of discrimination and harassment based on gender identity or expression against its citizens. Please vote in favor of HB 5723 and help pass it without any amendments, thank you.