



**PLEASE SUPPORT: HB 6452  
An Act Concerning Discrimination**

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**Testimony of Anne Stanback, Executive Director, Love Makes a Family  
Judiciary Committee, March 19, 2009**

Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor, and members of the Judiciary Committee: My name is Anne Stanback, and I am the Executive Director of *Love Makes a Family*, a statewide coalition of organizations and individuals working for equal rights for all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people living and working in Connecticut. I submit this testimony today in support of HB 6452, *An Act Concerning Discrimination*.

*Love Makes a Family* formed in 1999 to pass legislation to allow same-sex couples to legally adopt. Since the enactment of a second-parent adoption law in 2000, our organization has led the campaign for marriage equality in Connecticut.

While our primary mission has remained marriage equality, our Board of Directors voted in 2005 to add prohibiting discrimination based on gender identity or expression to our legislative agenda. The reason was simple: Transgender individuals face very real discrimination in our state, in jobs, in housing, in public accommodations and in other areas addressed by this bill.

In 1991 this legislature spoke out strongly against discrimination based on sexual orientation when it passed what is known informally as the "gay rights bill." Our state was one of the first states to pass such a comprehensive bill. When it comes to prohibiting discrimination based on gender identity and expression, however, Connecticut is not even in the top ten. Thirteen other states (including our New England neighbors of Vermont, Maine and Rhode Island) all have passed similar laws.

On the federal level, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of both sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. It is supported by every member of Connecticut's Congressional delegation, as well as by President Obama.

Connecticut employers have integrated transgender people into their workplaces for years, and major corporate citizens like Pitney Bowes, Aetna, The Hartford, Xerox and Yale University have strong policies in place to prohibit the kind of discrimination referenced in HB 6452.

In short, the move to prohibit discrimination against transgender people is not cutting edge; it is, in fact, becoming commonplace. The only organized effort to oppose this bill comes from the same group that has opposed *every* legislative protection for gay people passed by this legislature, including adoption rights and civil unions. The fair-minded majority in Connecticut opposes discrimination in all its forms.

A ruling from the state's Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities says that it is illegal to discriminate based on gender identity and expression, but the lack of *clear statutory* protection has created confusion. The result has been unnecessary discrimination and unnecessary litigation.

Transgender people are not asking for special rights; they are only asking to be treated fairly. Connecticut has a long and proud history of protecting gay, lesbian and bisexual citizens. Let us do the same for those who are transgender.

Thank you.