

March 19, 2009

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am writing you to express my support for the passage of H.B. 6452, An Act Concerning Discrimination. As a transgender person and a citizen of the State of Connecticut, I believe that it is important for the legislature to make it clear and unequivocal that our state will not tolerate discrimination based upon someone's gender identity or expression.

Two years ago I mustered up all my courage, and with the support of my family, friends and employer, I changed my gender expression. My change has not been without challenges, but one challenge that I was not forced to face was that of employment. My employer, the Judicial Branch, was very supportive. My superiors believed in my personal choice to change and my ability to perform my job at high level regardless of my gender expression. They knew that my change would cause some ripples through out the organization, but they also knew that the organization would not be adversely affected by my change.

My employer was wonderful, but others are not quite so understanding. Many employers, when faced with an employee whose gender identity or expression might not be considered the norm, opt to let that employee go. Others, will not offer employment to an otherwise qualified transgender applicant. Why is this? Maybe folks are scared or they just need a little education. Whatever the reason, the result is the same – discrimination.

With the passage of H.B. 6452 the law in Connecticut will be explicit – no discrimination based upon gender identity or expression. Period. A number of other states and municipalities have already determined that discrimination based upon gender identity or expression is unconscionable. It's time for Connecticut to do the same.

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