

Testimony for Public Hearing
Judiciary Committee
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S.B. 1125 (Raised), An Act Concerning the Comprehensive Revision of the Human Rights and Opportunities Statutes.

Good Morning Judiciary Committee Members. My name is Selina Welborn and I am an Advocacy Unlimited advocate, founder and chapter leader of the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance of Greater Hartford. Advocacy Unlimited is a statewide advocacy organization that offers education in self, systems and legislative advocacy skills for persons with, or in recovery from, psychiatric disabilities or co-occurring disorders. Since 1995, 371 advocates have graduated from 36 graduations across the state of Connecticut in our program.

As a member of four groups of people with a long history of discrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation and mental disability, I am pleased to support a bill such as S.B. 1125 which newly revises the Human Rights and Opportunities statutes to include more comprehensive non-discriminatory language, specifically for gay and lesbian people and people with 'mental disabilities' or who are perceived to have 'mental disabilities'. In the past, these groups of people have fought many legal battles to ensure their rights as human beings and citizens were upheld. For the groups mentioned the human rights struggles continue today on many fronts. The ever present specter of stigma, prejudice and discrimination continues to loom over all of us and clouds our recovery efforts.

As an advocate, I am in support of extending the rights and opportunities, especially employment contracts and employment opportunities to all citizens who are able to perform work for which they apply, without regard to sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry, present or past history of mental disability, mental retardation, learning disability or physical disability in addition to race, color, religious creed, and age. It is in fact the only fair

employment practice. I am also in support of protecting those citizens from being penalized or retaliated against for opposing discriminatory practice.

The revisions to the Human Rights and Opportunities statutes move us in the right direction. Please vote for S.B. 1125 and ensure that those of us who in the past have been excluded from the legal statutes have the same rights and protections, equal access to contracts and employment opportunities, as other protected classes and citizens.