

Testimony of Andrea Wilson  
In support of *HB 6599: An Act Concerning Discrimination*  
Judiciary Committee  
March 21, 2011

Senator Eric Coleman, Representative Gerry Fox, and committee members, I am writing in support of *HB 6599: An Act Concerning Discrimination*. This bill would extend the protection against discrimination that many groups in Connecticut currently have, based on classes including age, sex, race, religion, and sexual orientation. There was a time when discrimination based on these classes was legal and socially accepted. Now, in 2011, we understand and celebrate each person's unique gender identity and expression. The time has come when we know that equal opportunities based on gender identity and expression are also a basic human right.

This bill would create a safe space for the gender identity and expression of every person in Connecticut. It would protect transgender people, as well as those who are gender non-conforming. Who are "gender non-conforming" people? They are our tomboy daughters who have grown into women applying for jobs. They are our sons labeled as "different" in grade school applying to college and graduate school. They are our parents applying for credit. They are our brothers, sisters, friends, and spouses. They are us; we are them. We all deserve social and economic security.

A lifelong Connecticut resident, I have been an employee of Planned Parenthood of Southern New England and Yale University, which both have anti-discrimination policies that include gender identity and expression. This security would and should be expanded to employees of all companies and organizations by passing *HB 6599*.

I urge you to support the passage of *HB 6599: An Act Concerning Discrimination* in your committee and on the floors of the House and Senate. Close the gap in the state's non-discrimination statutes and protect us all.

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