



## Dannel P. Malloy

GOVERNOR  
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Testimony of Andrew J. McDonald

In support of House Bill 6599

*An Act Concerning Discrimination*

March 21, 2011

Good morning Sen. Coleman, Rep. Fox and other distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Andrew McDonald, and it is a pleasure to be here before you testifying for my first time as General Counsel to Governor Malloy. Governor Malloy has asked me to share with you his strong support of House Bill 6599, "An Act Concerning Discrimination." The Governor has been a longstanding supporter of this legislation, and he very much looks forward to signing it. In fact, that personal privilege for him is the only good reason this legislation hasn't passed in prior years. That is my own way of saying the passage of this bill is long overdue.

Legislation adding gender identity and expression to the list of protected classes in our antidiscrimination statute has come before this committee many times before. And every time it has been raised, the Governor, then the Mayor of Stamford, submitted testimony expressing his heartfelt support and urging the members of this committee to vote in favor of this important legislation.

As Mayor of the city of Stamford, Governor Malloy had the opportunity to witness how little effect an individual's transition in his or her gender expression need have on the workplace. Rachel Goldberg, who you will hear testify later today, was an attorney for the city of Stamford when she transitioned. She had been identified as a man all her life, while struggling with her own identity as a woman. I remember all too clearly the day Rachel, then known as Bruce, came into my office to tell me she was transitioning. At the time I was serving as Corporation Counsel for the City of Stamford, and I knew Bruce to be a good, smart, and hard working lawyer who was dedicated to his job. We were talking about some legal matters and when we finished he told me he needed to tell me something else. Before he did so, I saw something change in his eyes. His eyes went from a bold, confident and business like look to an unsure, nervous and even fearful stare. I knew he was scared. The trepidation he had in telling me was even more significant because I considered him not only a colleague, but a personal friend. And he was still

scared about what this would mean for him and his career. Imagine what it would take to tell someone in a position of authority over you who wasn't a friend, but perhaps might even be hostile towards you.

After he told me his very personal story, and I assured him that it changed nothing about our personal or professional relationship, he asked how Mayor Malloy would react to the news. I'm sure Rachel will tell you that story, but suffice it to say she remains a very valuable asset to the city of Stamford as an attorney, and she remains a personal friend of both the Governor and mine. In fact, she has helped both of us grow in our understanding, outlook and appreciation for what it takes to transition. She and the other transgendered individuals the Governor and I have come to meet in our professional and political lives are brave and courageous people.

You will hear testimony today from individuals who face fear and discrimination everyday from employers, neighbors, medical providers, landlords, and others solely due to the fact that the way that they present themselves does not conform to what some people expect. And you will hear statistics about how this affects their personal safety, emotional welfare, and social and economic security. To avoid giving you information you are sure to hear from others, I offer you my perspective as a former chair of this committee on how close we have come to providing a protection that 13 states, over 130 municipalities, the District of Columbia and over 400 of the Fortune 1000 companies have already provided.

As many of you will recall and some of you will hear for the first time, this legislation has historically enjoyed overwhelming bipartisan support in this committee. Of the three votes taken, it passed by margins of 28:8 in 2006, 29:4 in 2007 and 37:6 in 2008. I urge you to continue that legacy and support our state's tradition of safeguarding an individual's right to be free from discrimination.

This legislation has previously made it through the committees on Judiciary, Government Administration and Elections, Higher Education and Education. On the one occasion it was called to the floor, it passed the senate by an extraordinary 30:4 votes before lengthy debate in the final days of the session stalled it on the house floor. As Judiciary Committee members, you have the opportunity to hear the impassioned testimony of individuals who need the protections that this legislation offers. Unfortunately this subject is one that your fellow legislators know less about, and they will understandably have questions. I implore members of this committee to take the opportunity today to ask questions of those who testify and learn all that you can so that you may in turn educate your fellow legislators, who will not have the benefit of hearing testimony on the importance of this legislation. Through education comes understanding.

The equal treatment of individuals under the laws of our state has been an issue of continuing importance to me throughout my career in public service. And I sincerely thank you for the opportunity to speak before you on this issue today.