

Testimony on H.B. 6599
An Act Concerning Discrimination

Honorable chairs, members of the Judiciary committee, my name is David Sant and I am a Masters student at the University of Connecticut's School of Social Work and I am here to speak in support of H.B. 6599, An Act Concerning Discrimination. I recently relocated to Connecticut from the state of Idaho because I was so impressed by the great legislative record here regarding human rights. However, I was surprised to learn that Connecticut was not one of the states that included gender identity and expression in their non-discrimination policies.

This piece of legislation is vital to the continued progress of this state. It goes beyond putting in writing non-discrimination laws but deeply impacts Connecticut residents in a profound way. It is a statement to every person in this state that they are allowed to feel safe and comfortable in their own skin.

I say every person in the state because every person, including those in this room, has a gender identity and expression. This law protects not just the transgender and gender non-conformist community, but all individuals and families who reside in Connecticut.

It is also important to note that gender rights, especially the protection of transgender rights, are different and separate from gay rights. Gender identity and expression and sexual orientation, while they are parts that make up the whole of a person, are distinct in their definitions and are not synonymous as many people think.

I will close by stating that back home, the progressive community has a saying. Idaho is too great for hate. Well, ladies and gentleman, Connecticut is too great for hate also. Thank-you for your time.