

Testimony on HB 6599: An Act Concerning Discrimination

Submitted by: Elliott Kiefer

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Greetings, members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Elliott Kiefer. I live in West Hartford, and am a 16 year old Sophomore at Conard High School, and belong to the Gay-Straight Alliance there. I write in support of HB 6599: An Act Concerning Discrimination. I know a handful of Transgendered people, and you can rest assured they are well-intentioned and intelligent people. To deny them any right, most importantly the safety of a job, is blatant discrimination, and you would only be hurting yourselves to discriminate somebody, with such ability, a job. People may argue this is special treatment, most notably saying that living as a Transgender is a choice. These statements are ridiculous, and it completely undermines the emotional courage and willpower to actually live life as a transgendered person. Not only that, but being a Transgendered person is a lifestyle. The transition of identity isn't something that happens over a day, it's an emotional and personal marathon. You would only be a fool to not respect someone who goes through such a challenging experience, just for the happiness to be who they want. A personal friend of mine has been ridiculed ever since the start of their transition, and continues to be ridiculed now, but I can tell you they're happy because they are who they've always wanted to be, and he deserves respect for that, just like every person who wants live and prosper in America.

Many other states have already passed laws similar to the one in question today. Illinois, Colorado, Oregon, and California have all passed a similar law, and to the farthest extent of my memory I don't recall any catastrophe involving Transgendered people in the workplace. So

why should Connecticut be late to the party? I assure you, I love Connecticut, it's been my home for all of my 16 years. But I will be ashamed to be called a Nutmegger if we are just seen as another state that refuses to accept differences in people. And finally, probably the most argued reason why this bill should not be passed is schools. People opposing this law say they know what's best for the kids, but have they bothered to even ask their kids about the matter? The biggest problem with this issue is awareness. For those who are unaware, there is a difference between sex and gender. Sex is who you are, biologically. Gender is what you define yourself as, and can be different than your sex. If parents just sat down with their kids for a few moments and inform them of the difference, and even tell them about people who want to be different, then parents would be saving schools a lot of issues. If kids were informed, the identity transition of a teacher would not be distracting at all. In fact, it would be an eye opening experience. The child would learn to respect differences later in life, and hopefully discrimination against anyone would be vanquished, all because that child was informed. Hopefully you who are listening have also been informed, and as I finish this testimony, I leave you with a quote from H.P. Lovecraft "The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown."