

Testimony in support of HB 6599: *An Act Concerning Discrimination*

Honorable Judiciary Committee members,

My name is Konrad Ralph Wainright. I live in Easton, Connecticut, and I stand in **support of HB 6599: *An Act Concerning Discrimination***.

Why do I support this act?

First, let me tell you about myself: I am fluent in French and love the writing of Ernest Hemingway. I once won an art contest at my school. I love history, impressionist paintings, and sometimes do algebra for fun. I have a deep passion for Star Wars and Harry Potter. Harry Truman was my favorite president. I'm a hard worker and my teachers put good comments on my report cards. I am a cat person. I am a good kid. I stay out of trouble and my parents are proud of me. Someday I want to get married and adopt foster kids.

I am also transgender.

I am only seventeen years old, and I have had to worry about things that most teenagers never give a second thought. I have had to worry about where I am going to live, and if a landlord will even allow me to rent an apartment or a banker will allow me to get a loan because for some reason the birth defect that caused me to be born with two X chromosomes makes me unworthy of a place to live. I have had to cast aside my dream of being a French teacher because school administrators, parents, and other teachers do not want their students exposed to someone like me, because the fact that I had to work harder to match my outer appearance to my inner one makes me a bad influence on children. I worry that I won't be able to adopt kids who so desperately need a dad because regardless of my moral character, my body's shortcomings stand in the way of getting an approval. Because I had to persevere and stay true to myself, I am a second-class citizen. Because I had to fight the odds and go through intense self-loathing, denial, and prejudice, I am at a high risk of hate violence. Because I had to make decisions and know myself better than most teenage boys, I have to be afraid of using a public restroom, of introducing myself, and of going on a job interview.

Because I am forced to use the women's restroom, I have been asked on multiple occasions and with varying degrees of rudeness if I am in the right bathroom. I have been asked invasive and personal questions regarding my body and personal life. I have had to out myself to friends who only knew me as male because I could not risk using the men's room and breaking the law. I have had to worry about which colleges to apply to because I might have to live in a girl's dormitory. I have had to make decisions, have had to face risks, have had to give up dreams that no teenage boy should have to do. I am not told that I can be anything that I want to be, because the world is unkind to people like me. I have to revise my hopes and dreams because of something as personal as a physical defect.

If you need more of an answer, I'd like to invite you to look at my arms. Run your hands over them; feel the bumps of old scars and the roughness of newer ones. There was a time in my life when I would make a new one every time I had to use the women's restroom. There was a time

in my life when I would make a new one every time I was called ma'am in public. There was a time in my life when I would make a new one every time I had to tick the box labeled "female", every time I had to introduce myself under the wrong name, every time I was afraid for my safety when I used the *right* name, every time I thought about the fact that I could not be a teacher or a foster dad and be a transgender man at the same time because the world was going to make it as hard for me as possible. Every time I heard about another hate crime against a transgender person. Every time the laws of this country and this state left me and others like me unprotected when we needed it most.

No seventeen-year-old should have to make those scars. No child should have to have those fears. No parent should be denied children, no enthusiastic educator denied a career. No one should be barred from a bathroom because of the government's own insecurities that people like me will undermine traditional family values when all we really want to do is pee in peace. If I were missing a leg, I would not be denied such basic rights. I'm missing something a little different, but it's no more important to my personality or character. I am not asking for much. I am just asking to be treated like the typical teenager that I know I am. I am just asking for a chance to never have to see another transgender boy or girl make scars like mine, or have worries like mine. I'm not asking for an easier life. I'm asking for a normal one. Thank you.