

Testimony in support of 6599: An Act Concerning Discrimination

My name is Nicolette Laume, I am a Connecticut voter and will complete my undergraduate education at Trinity College this May.

I am here to urge you to vote in favor of HB 6599: An Act Concerning Discrimination. This bill will do only what 13 other states and the District of Columbia have already done: approve legislation that prohibits discrimination so that all citizens will be treated with fairness and equality!

I firmly believe that this issue affects EVERYONE. One's sense of being a man or a woman, and how a person shows that to society is shared by EVERYONE. Regardless of their gender, everyone has a gender identity and a gender expression. Protecting everyone's right to express their identity should be protected without exception.

My own gender identity and gender expression tend to match the sex that I was assigned at birth. For this, I am very lucky in light of the incredible discrimination that my Connecticut peers are facing because gender identity and expression are not expressly included in our anti-discrimination legislation. Even though my sex assigned at birth and gender identity and expression are typically viewed as normative, I have not escaped discrimination based on gender identity and expression. As an out member of both my high school and college's LGBTQIA student groups, my gender identity was and is frequently questioned in an effort to invalidate my efforts of educating my peers.

But again, I'm lucky, because unlike me, my friends whose gender expression does not match the sex with which they were assigned at birth, have had to face far more than just insults. My friends who have received death threats, been physically attacked, been denied work, been denied access to bathrooms, parties and places of business, and kicked out of home, need this legislation. I need this legislation. The young people who are no longer with us due to suicide needed this legislation, and died because our state has not yet passed a law prohibiting discrimination based on gender identity and expression.

Please support this bill so that more young people like myself in our state do not have endure the harassment, violence and isolation that comes from such discrimination. This bill is one huge step towards creating a safe place all people, and particularly for young people attending schools in our state. We all need this legislation so that harassment, discrimination and violence and the related lack of education, unemployment, homelessness and poor health do not have to be a part of growing up for Connecticut's youths.

Thank you very much,

Nicolette Laume