

Tony F.
Testimony for the Judiciary Committee in support of
HB 6599: An Act Concerning Discrimination
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My name is Tony F. , I live in New Haven and I support HB6599 An Act Concerning Discrimination.

In 2005 I transitioned from female to male. At that time I was a Manufacturing Supervisor at a small manufacturing company in Branford CT. The company employs fifty people and thirty of them I supervised. When I made the decision to medical and socially transition, I feared that I would lose my job but I knew I had to do this to keep myself alive. I went into the HR persons office and told her that I was going out for surgery. She asked if I was OK and I told yes and that I was having gender confirming chest surgery. I went out on medical leave and came back three weeks later. I remember sitting in my car scared to death of what everyone's reaction was going to be. I remember telling myself ... be brave and just go back to work. I walked in to the manufacturing department and headed into my office. I will say that a few jaws dropped, because I had grown a goatee and was clearly presenting male. Twenty minutes later the owner walked into my office, sat down and said " he now, right?" I replied "yes sir, he now". He stood up and told me that he would inform all the managers he ended the conversation congratulating me. At that moment I knew that I was not going to lose my job. He set the tone that discrimination against me for my gender identity was not going to be excepted.

In a Fortune 500 Small Business Magazine article that featured my successful transition at work, the owner of my company said "If you start limiting your choices in staff based on this kind of thing, you're cutting yourself off from a lot of good people". And he was right I became a better supervisor. I was finally comfortable in my body and was more focused and more productive. I was actually promoted to Manufacturing Manager last year.

I also run two transgender youth groups in New Haven. I see the effects of how discrimination beats these children down. From suicidal thoughts to self mutilation. I say this because this is real and this is happening in Connecticut. I hear their cries and know that passing this bill would make a big difference to the lives of these children.

My community is not asking for special right's or special protection. My community is asking for the same protection against discrimination that everyone else receives as a citizen of Connecticut.