

Testimony for supported HB 6599, An Act Concerning Discrimination

Senator Coleman, Representative Fox and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Ace Ricker, and have always supported HB 6599, An Act Concerning Discrimination my entire life. Having this bill passed will change my life, and save many others that face discrimination everyday. I have known I am transgender since I was 11 yrs old, and came out in the community when I was just 14. I have testified for this bill in 2008; only being able to put my first name, for the fear of back lash from members of society. I have been one out of the 83% that has been harassed at my job for being who I am. Being told I should act a certain way because I am different, and to not be too outgoing in the work place , for it may bring you out as a not so typical {stereotyped} leader. I have worked several jobs all over CT from Shelton, New Haven, Bridgeport, to Trumbull. Seeing how hard it is to just getting a job, let alone maintaining a job { having a high school diploma and in college part-time }, because I'm transgender, still was almost impossible.

I am part of the 86% and 38% of the students that went through school being physically and sexually harassed by there peers and teachers. Being called names/threaten physical abuse, to being physically assaulted by some of my peers. Being threaten " I would regret it , if I went to my own prom because of physical harm to myself". I have faced discrimination my entire life and have had to stand strong to survive that hatred that has been throw at

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me over and over again. I feel even in the most public of places I still am not safe, for just being who I am. My parents disowned me and kicked me out the same night fearing the pain I would have to ender with being me; ... they couldn't face it/ nor accept it. What has made me stand so strong here today, has been the people that are in this room and in my community who have been there to help me stand back on my two feet, when I am pushed down by others hatred toward me. My church accepted me with open arms when I came out this past year, and they have /accepted/ respected me to the fullest, as if I am part of their own family. People at my job greet me with smiles and "Hey Ace". I am thankful for those around me that are fighting this fight to pass this bill. For everyone whether tall, short, black, white, non- conforming, conforming, and transgender{ and everyone else }. Everyone deserves to know that any type of discrimination will not be tolerated and that their lives are as important as everyone else's. I am Ace Ricker and I am proud to be who I am and have always been. Thank you.