

This is a statement in support of CT General Assembly Bill No. 6572.

For Public Hearing, Wednesday, March 13, 2013

By. Matthew Collin Morgan

My name is Matthew Morgan and I am the Executive Director of Journey Home, a nonprofit organization working on innovative solutions to homelessness in the Greater Hartford region. I also identify as bisexual and have been married to my husband for seven years, and have often experienced stigma and bias against us because of our relationship. We recently went to India for the birth of our biological child we had through surrogacy. I am happy to say we returned with a beautiful daughter named Gloria who is now six weeks old. However, on the day we arrived in India, there was an article on the front page of the leading newspaper, The Times of India, announcing that gay couples would no longer be allowed to do surrogacy in India. From that point on, we faced constant questioning, stigma, and bureaucratic battles to bring our daughter home. While rights and protections in many states like Connecticut have expanded for gay couples, rights in other countries like India are being taken away. Connecticut can also become a leader in expanding rights and protections for those experiencing homelessness.

At Journey Home, we are working to end homelessness, especially chronic homelessness. For the past three years, Journey Home has conducted a survey among all the emergency shelters in Greater Hartford and found that 21 % in 2011 and 20% in 2012 had been victims of a violent crime against them. I interviewed a man named Jorge who said that when he was sleeping in an abandoned building, he was woken up by someone swinging a golf club into his head and breaking his jaw. He did not know who the person was who committed this crime and he never saw him again. Thankfully, Jorge is now in supportive housing and doing very well, but still has nightmares about that experience. This kind of crime should be considered a Class C felony, but too often people are not treated equally because of their housing status. Just as many states have expanded rights for gay couples including the protective status of sexual orientation, at least six states in the US have also added a protective status for people experiencing homelessness because of the stigma they constantly face. I encourage you to support this bill, so that Connecticut will also become a leader in expanding the rights and protections for those facing homelessness.