



HUMAN
RIGHTS
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The Honorable Sen. Terry B. Gerratana
Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Public Health
Legislative Office Building
Room 3000
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

The Honorable Rep. Matthew Ritter
Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Public Health
Legislative Office Building
Room 3004
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

March 16, 2014

Re: SUPPORT for HB 7006, an Act Concerning Birth Certificate Amendments

Dear Chairperson Gerratana and Chairperson Ritter:

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC), on behalf of our more than 18,000 members in Connecticut, thanks you for hosting a hearing on HB 7006, a vital measure that will ensure that transgender people are able to change their birth certificates to reflect their correct name and gender without unnecessarily expensive and invasive obstacles. We urge you to pass this important legislation.

The Human Rights Campaign is America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) equality. By inspiring and engaging all Americans, HRC strives to end discrimination against LGBT citizens and realize a nation that achieves fundamental fairness and equality for all. As an advocate of equal rights for all members of the LGBT community, HRC believes that transgender people should be able to receive appropriate identification and documentation that reflects the way they live their lives.

Current Connecticut law makes it difficult and expensive for transgender people to update their Connecticut birth certificate because it requires them to submit proof of having undergone surgery.¹ However, based on current medical understanding of transgender people, an individualized course of care for gender transition is recommended.² Even among those for whom surgery is appropriate, many cannot receive it because such care is not covered by their insurance, there may be no appropriate providers, or they have a medical condition that prevents them from undergoing these medical procedures. Nationally, only 1 in 5 transgender people (21%) have been able to update all their identification documents and records, including birth certificates, to reflect their appropriate name and gender.³

¹ Conn. Gen. Stat. § 19a-42; Conn. Agencies Regs. § 19a-41-9(e).

² Coleman, E., et al. "Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender, and Gender-Nonconforming People, Version 7." *International Journal of Transgenderism*, 13:165-232, 2011. Available at http://www.wpath.org/uploaded_files/140/files/IJT%20SOC.%20V7.pdf

³ Grant, Jaime M., Lisa A. Mottet, Justin Tanis, Jack Harrison, Jody L. Herman, and Mara Keisling. *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey*. Washington: National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2011. Available at http://endtransdiscrimination.org/PDFs/NTDS_Report.pdf.

HB 7006 would instead allow a transgender person to produce a written statement from a licensed healthcare provider,⁴ verifying that the person has “undergone surgical, hormonal or other treatment clinically appropriate for the applicant for the purpose of gender transition.”⁵ This procedure would simplify the process of updating records and comply with the best understanding of transgender healthcare.

Transgender people with incongruent identity documents frequently experience violence and discrimination. For example, the National Transgender Discrimination Survey found that 40% of transgender people with incongruent documents experienced harassment. Additionally, 15% reported being asked to leave an establishment, and 3% reported being assaulted. Furthermore, identity documents are required by employers for payroll purposes, and incongruent documents can lead to a transgender employee being “outed” at work, which may result in discrimination. Incongruent documents can also cause unnecessary expense or suspicion by the government when dealing with a person who has unmatched documents.

The current statute in Connecticut is outdated and inadequate when compared to more advanced policies followed by the U.S. Department of State,⁶ the Social Security Administration,⁷ and the various states that have updated their laws in the past few years.⁸ The technical changes in this legislation will modernize Connecticut law and standardize a necessary government function in a simple way that is consumer friendly, concise, and professional.

Thank you for allowing us to provide testimony on this important legislation which will improve the lives of transgender citizens in Connecticut. If you should have any questions regarding HRC’s support for HB 7006, please contact me at 202-572-8960 or by email at Alison.Gill@hrc.org.

Sincerely,



Alison Gill, Esq.
Senior Legislative Counsel
Human Rights Campaign

⁴ The bill allows for statements from physicians, advanced practice registered nurses, licensed nurses, or psychologists.

⁵ Connecticut House Bill 7006 (2015).

⁶ U.S. Dept. of State, Foreign Affairs Manual, vol. 9 (2011). 7 FAM 1300 Appendix M, Gender Change. Available at <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/143160.pdf>

⁷ U.S. Social Security Administration. RM 10212.200 Changing Numident Data for Reasons other than Name Change (2013). Available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/lnx/0110212200>.

⁸ 11 states plus DC have statewide laws or polices that facilitate gender marker change on birth certificates for transgender people which do not require surgery. Gill, A.M. (2015). *2014 State Equality Index*. Washington, DC: Human Rights Campaign Foundation. Available at www.hrc.org/SEI