

## **An Act Concerning Birth Certificates HB7006**

Thank you distinguished members of the committee for allowing me to testify here today. I am here to ask you to vote for bill HB7006 An Act Concerning Birth Certificates.

My name is Diana Lombardi and I transgender woman from Berlin and because of a medical reasons makes having surgery very risky. There are many transgender people who like me cannot have surgery for one reason or another, some like me for a medical condition and for others they cannot afford the surgery even with insurance because of the large co-pays. For transgender men, gender reassignment surgery is much more expensive, more invasive, and is not as reliable as it is for transgender women. Consequently, most transgender men have only what they call "top surgery" and therefore they are ineligible to have their birth certificate changed to reflect their gender. Therefore, we are stuck with a birth certificate with our wrong gender.

It is not on a whim that we change our gender but rather because of a life long struggle. Whether we transition in high school or in retirement like I did, we all knew we were different at a young ago. My earliest memories are of knowing that I should have been a girl and I hide it in shame all my life. It was my secret, but over time the dysphoria over my gender built up until I transitioned when I was 59 years old. It is not easy to transition, your life is changed completely both socially, emotionally, and physically.

When we decide to transition we have to follow a "Standard of Care" that guides our transition. The bill that is before you requires a medical professional to attest to our treatment. As I have said transition is not an easy thing to do, it is very hard emotional and not having your gender on your documents all in agreement makes it even more difficult and stressful. I can change my gender marker for Social Security, Medicare and my driver license with a letter from my therapist but not on my birth certificate. It is this mismatch that causes the problems and the emotional stress.

Even with the non-discrimination law that was passed in 2011, many of my friends have a hard time finding employment and many of them are underemployed. And for those who do not have surgery they "Out" themselves whenever they have to show their birth certificate as proof of citizenship to their employer.

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We run into problems again when we get our driver license because of the Real ID Act we have to show our birth certificate. When the gender does not match it means that once again we have to “Out” ourselves and explain the discrepancy. It is not just with our employers or driver license but we have problems whenever we have to show our documents wherever we have to show our birth certificate to establish our identity and citizenship.

Please pass HB 7006; it will go a long ways to help end discrimination and the sigma that we face.