

**Testimony Supporting**  
**Raised H.B. 7006: An Act Concerning Birth Certificate Amendments**  
To the Public Health Committee  
Submitted by: Jennifer Levi, GLAD Director of the Transgender Rights Project

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Co-Chairs Senator Gerratana and Representative Ritter, and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee:

GLAD urges passage of H.B. No. 7006 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING BIRTH CERTIFICATE AMENDMENTS. This bill would modernize Connecticut's standard for correcting birth certificates issued to transgender people who are born in Connecticut. The bill would revise Connecticut law to reflect the contemporary medical standard of care for transgender people and make it possible for transgender people to have documentation that recognized their lived experiences and that diminishes their exposure to discrimination, harassment, and violence.

**What does this proposed amendment to Connecticut's birth certificate law do?**

The proposed amendment would **modernize** Connecticut's standard for allowing transgender and intersex people to correct the gender designation on their birth certificates.

**What does it mean to be transgender?**

Everyone has a gender identity, that is, a person's innate and internalized sense of who that person is as a man or a woman. For most people, their gender identity is aligned with their sex assigned at birth. However, some people experience a misalignment between their assigned sex and their gender identity. Such individuals are referred to as transgender. The misalignment between a person's assigned sex and their gender identity can cause extreme anguish and distress. The medical term for the condition that some people experience as a result of that distress is "gender dysphoria" (GD). GD is recognized as a serious medical condition in both the International Classification of Diseases -10 published by the World Health Organization and the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V) published by the American Psychiatric Association. Treatment for gender dysphoria is well-established and includes, in appropriate cases, undergoing medical treatment to bring a person's body into alignment with their gender identity. That process is known as gender transition.

**Why is it important for transgender people to be able to change the gender and name on their identification documents?**

As discussed above, it is important for a transgender person's emotional well-being that everything in their life aligns with their chosen name and gender identity. In addition, transgender people still face serious discrimination in their lives, and a mismatch between a person's gender identity and the sex listed on an identification document can result in "outing" the person and

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increasing the chances that the person will be discriminated against or be subjected to harassment or violence. Not having documentation that matches a person's gender identity can lead to discrimination in housing, education, and employment, and increases the risk that a person may be reliant on government support for basic subsistence. Also, in this age of increased security, a gender mismatch on an identification document makes every day experiences more challenging.

### **What is wrong with the law as currently written?**

The current standard for correcting gender designations on birth certificates is **outdated and not supported by contemporary medical views**. Connecticut regulations currently require a transgender person to submit proof of having undergone surgery before being able to get a correction of the gender marker.

The World Professional Association for Transgender Health is recognized as the leading world health organization dedicated to the study of transgender health issues. WPATH has developed a medical protocol known as the Standards of Care (SOC) for confirming gender transition. The current SOC recommends an individualized course of care for gender transition that may include any combination of the following treatment options: mental health care, social transition (living consistent with the person's gender identity), hormone therapy, or a range sex confirming surgeries. The proper combination of treatments is to be determined by the patient's needs, the treating physician, and other mental health professionals.

In addition, the **American Medical Association** has called for the "elimination of any requirement that individuals undergo gender affirmation surgery in order to change their sex designation on birth certificates" and for policies that instead allow corrections to gender markers on birth certificates on the basis of individualized clinically appropriate treatment. The AMA's view is based on the fact that gender transition is a highly individualized process with surgical intervention being only one benchmark of gender transition, among others. The proposed amendment would change the standard from one that requires proof of surgery to one that requires proof of "surgical, hormonal, or other treatment" as evidenced by a letter from a healthcare provider with knowledge of the facts and circumstances of the individual's health care needs.

### **Have any other state or government entities adopted this standard?**

Yes. The proposed amendments would bring Connecticut in line with 7 other jurisdictions and several federal agencies who have modernized their birth certificates standards. Included among them are the states of Rhode Island, New York, Oregon, Washington, Vermont, California, as well as the District of Columbia. Federal agencies that revised their standards include the State Department, Veterans Administration, Social Security Administration, Office of Personnel and Management, and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Connecticut's Registry of Motor Vehicles also allows transgender people to change the gender designation on their driver's licenses with no requirement for surgery.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.