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FTR

P.O. Box 2094
Hartford, CT 06145-2094
www.hglhc.org
P: 860-278-4163
F: 860-278-5995

On behalf of the Hartford Gay and Lesbian Health Collective, I urge the Insurance and Real Estate Committee to halt any progress of the proposed H.B. No. 5193 AN ACT CONCERNING HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR GENDER REASSIGNMENT SURGERY.

The Hartford Gay and Lesbian Health Collective receives calls almost every day from Connecticut residents - individuals who identify all along the continuum of gender identity and expression. They seek information, guidance, support and resources to help them become the person they truly know they are inside.

Having insurance coverage for gender reassignment surgery and related surgical expenses is an important and necessary resource for individuals seeking only to be full participants in our society. The negative impact of this bill on individuals living in our communities would be tremendous. Connecticut has taken so many important steps forward in supporting its citizens. Taking steps backwards isn't acceptable.

Thank you.

Linda Estabrook, MPH

Executive Director