

Dear Co-Chair Flexer and Co-Chair Fox, Vice Chairs Winkler and Haskell, Ranking members Senator Sampson and Representative France, and esteemed members of the committee,

It is with great motivation that I am writing to you today to ask for your support on HB5505

(<https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/CGABillStatus/cgabillstatus.asp...>)

and how it would impact my friends and I. Please see at the end of this email related links showing a clear movement throughout the US.

My name is Raven Matherne. I use gender neutral pronouns, like they and them. Back in 2017, I came out, lost my job, made a plan, knocked on doors introducing myself and the changes I wanted to bring to my city, and my neighbors saw fit to seat me in Stamford's legislative chambers. In doing so, to my knowledge, I became the first openly transgender elected legislator in our great state.

I am not a medical professional, nor was I born observably intersex. However, I can share with you my experience as an openly trans person.

I've known my whole life that I was transgender. Some of my earliest childhood memories involve gender dysphoria. I had severe, persistent, distinct issues with my body my whole life. Growing up, I was constantly involved in plenty of activities to socialize; and I figured out overtime, that every time I did something that challenged a masculine norm, I would be labeled an outsider, and lose people that I thought were friends.

The message being sent was as subtle and persistent as my dysphoria. To my young mind, the sensations I was experiencing had to mean that I was a bad person.

By the time I was just breaking into my early teens, I had started engaging in self harm. I will forever carry the marks on my body that I carved into it as a child because alone, isolated, and confused, I had been led to believe that I was evil, and I couldn't escape me. It is not a concept that any child should have to wrestle with.

Thankfully, I found a crutch to use as a fill in for my removed sense of self worth. I had a natural talent for the martial arts, and eventually became an instructor. I was never going to be rich, but I had found a passion. Through the martial arts I was able to help kids that were dealing with their own brands of demons. Teaching them how strong they were while also helping them overcome the challenges they were facing in their own lives offered me a redemption of sorts. At least for a while, I was able to counter-balance the weight of my dysphoric self hatred, with this sense of giving back. Unfortunately, self hatred doesn't balance well. Finally, I broke down.

A little while after I came out, I lost my job. However, I was incredibly thankful to have my family's support. I made a plan, and I decided that a vital part of that plan had to involving serving others. It's how I've spent my life deriving my self worth after all. So I started knocking on the doors of my neighbors about the changes I wanted to see in my city, and was elected to be a voice for my community.

Along any step of my life, I believe my journey could have involved less anguish had a simple theme been introduced... recognition.

Recognition that not everyone fits cleanly into male or female definitions of sex and gender. Recognition that forcing people to decide between two incorrect options on a form is an impossible situation. Recognition simply that trans people exist. I urge you all to please help get HB5505 to the House Chamber.

We would also like to thank Representatives Jeff Currey, Raghiv Allie-Brennan, Jillian Gilchrest, Josh Elliott and David Michel for their support.

Members of the committee, please help HB5505 get to the House Chamber !

Kind regards,

Raven Matherne  
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<https://www.reuters.com/.../nonbinary-intersex-11-us-states-i...>

<https://transequality.org/.../understanding-non-binary-people...>

[https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/dmv/detail/dl/gender\\_id](https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/dmv/detail/dl/gender_id)

<https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb17-1122>

<https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/fac.../billNavClient.xhtml...>

<https://www.nytimes.com/.../gender-neutral-birth-certificate...>

<https://www.nytimes.com/.../airline-travel-gender-choices.html>

<https://www.huffingtonpost.com/.../new-york-city-third-gender...>