

Testimony on LCO 5915: An Act Concerning a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Health and Human Services Networks

Chairwoman Moore, Chairwoman Abercrombie, Ranking Members Logan and Case:

My name is John Board, Chairman of New Britain and I am here today to testify in favor of House Bill 7359: An Act Concerning a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Health and Human Services Network. Today, I am approaching this testimony from two points of view: First, from a LGBTQ advocate point of view and second from a government and administrative point of view.

I first want to provide a preview overview of what Human Services Networks (HSNs) are. The mission of a Human Services Network is to create connections, share information, strengthen providers, and support and advocate for good public policy thus ensuring the continuing quality of human services. In forming this HSN, individuals in our community statewide will be able to gain access to vital services like housing and food, while also strengthening relationships with local government. The LGBTQ+ community does need the opportunity to have more research conducted in order to better inform best practices and policy moving forward.

I do have concerns about organizational involvement in this HSN as it relates to the RFP process set out by OPM. In section 1b4, the bill states that the Network would assist with developing RFPs. As you know, under state guidelines there there must be an active sense of ethics and adherence to conflict of interest. As a result of the organizations who sit on the Network would not be eligible for any awards. We must find a way, working together to address this - how do we ensure that our leading organizations provide information and work together, while also not losing the ability to accept an RFP. As somebody who has served in municipal government, I am keenly aware of RFP regulations and conflict of interest guidelines.

On balance, the concept of this legislation is a net positive. It brings together LGBTQ+ groups in the State to assist the Department of Public Health in developing policy and assisting the greater community.